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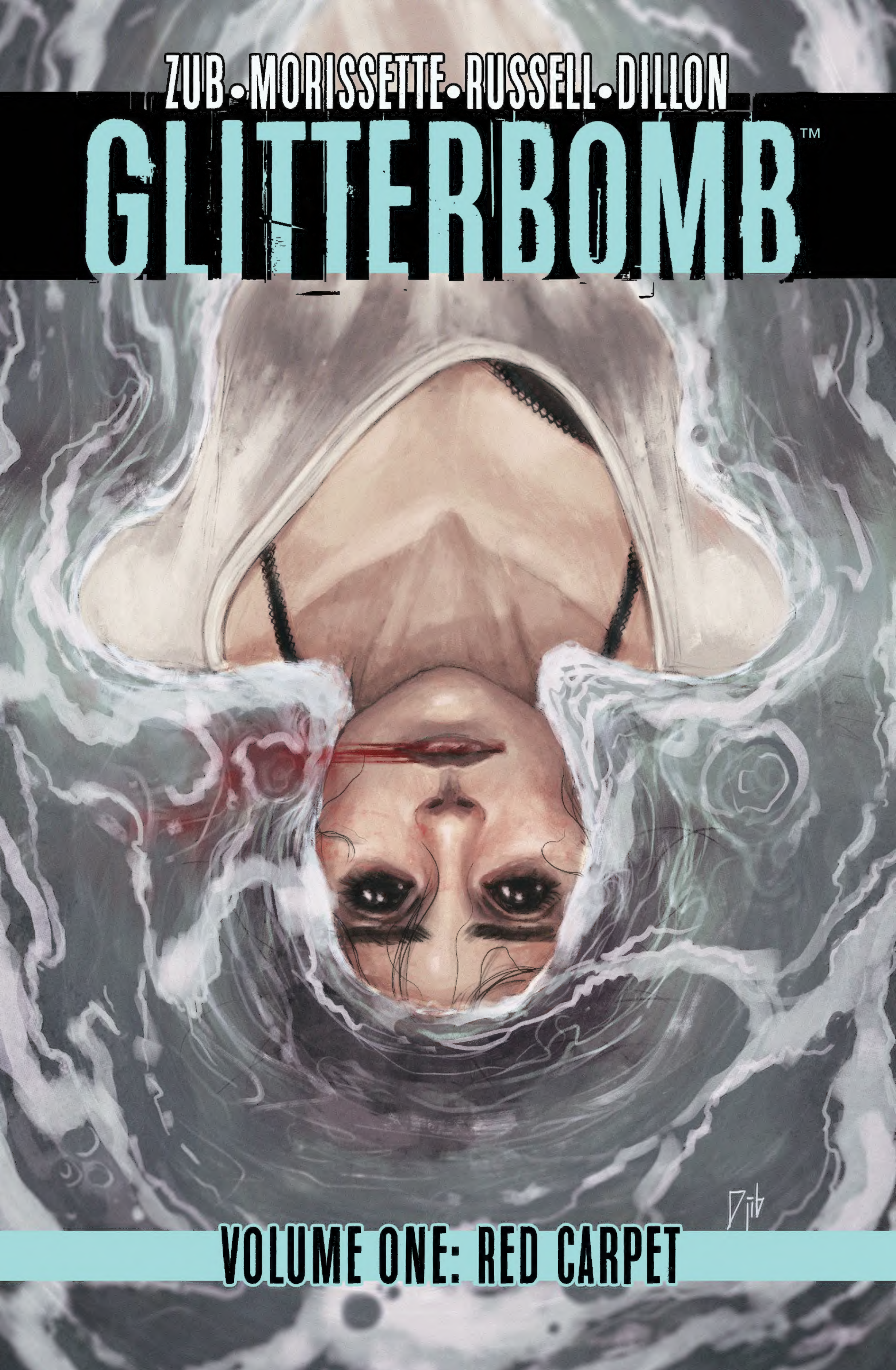
GLITTERBOMB™



VOLUME ONE: RED CARPET

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GLITTERBOMB

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CREATED BY JIM ZUB AND DJIBRIL MORISSETTE-PHAN

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PART 1: CIRCULAR HOMICIDE

LET'S BE ***HONEST***, FARRAH. YOU NEVER ***BELONGED*** HERE. IT'S ALWAYS BEEN A ***BAD FIT.***

LET ME MAKE THIS ***SIMPLE.*** THERE ARE ***TWO*** CATEGORIES OF PEOPLE WE REPRESENT...

...TREND-FUCKERS AND ***GENETIC LOTTERY WINNERS.***

YOU'RE NOT AN INTERNET CELEBRITY, CONTROVERSIAL MOUTHPIECE, OR GIFTED-DISABLED-MINORITY-WHATEVER-THE-FUCK.

YOU LOOK ***OKAY*** FOR A MIDDLE-AGED MOM, BUT YOU'RE NOT GIVING TWELVE-YEAR-OLD BOYS WOOD WHEN YOU WALK BY, Y'KNOW?

OUR BUZZ IS "***EXCEPTIONALISM.***"

"OUT OF THE ***ORDINARY.***"

"***DIAMOND*** IN THE ROUGH."

BIG-TIME ***ASPIRATIONAL SHIT.***

GET IT? I NEED AN ***ANGLE.***

HAVE YOU GOT ANYTHING I CAN ***SELL?***

SHUNK

SPWINT

FWUMP

FWIP

KA-THUMP

SELL *THAT*, YOU ROTTEN LITTLE *FUCK-WIT.*

OH, GOD... IT HAPPENED *AGAIN.*

GLITTERBOMB

SIX HOURS EARLIER-

SO WE'LL KNOW BY ***FRIDAY?***

I HEARD THE CASTING DIRECTOR ON THE PHONE HAVING A SMOKE. THEY NEED SOMEONE ***QUICK.***

IS THAT GOOD?

WHO KNOWS?

MY AGENT SAID THEY'RE CASTING A NEW SPY SHOW AT PARAMOUNT.

THE ONE WITH ***LAWRENCE JAY?***

YEAH, THAT ONE.

STAY AWAY. THAT GUY'S A FUCKING ***ASS-GRABBER.***

Auditions in progress PLEASE STAY QUIET

'SCUSE ME. IS THIS SEAT ***TAKEN?***

NAH. GO FOR IT.

I'M ***BROOKE.***

FARRAH.

WHICH PART DID YOU READ FOR?
JACKIE... THE *BITCH.*
ME TOO.
EVERYONE HERE'S READING FOR JACKIE. IT'S A *CATTLE CALL.*
OH...
HOW DO YOU THINK IT WENT?
I DON'T KNOW... *GOOD*, I GUESS.
SO, DO YOU THINK JACKIE'S ACTUALLY A *VILLAIN* OR IS SHE JUST *DESPERATE?*
...WHAT?
THE BITCH--*EVIL* OR *DESPERATE?*
I DON'T CARE.
ALL I KNOW IS I *NEED* THIS FUCKING PART...

WELL FARRAH, MY ***ACTING COACH*** SAID WE CAN'T HANG OUR HOPES ON EVERY AUDITION.

THEY'RE ALL ***EXPERIENCES*** AND THEY TEACH US SOMETHING ABOUT ***OURSELVES***, EVEN IF WE DON'T GET WHAT WE WANT.

SURE...

MY ***STYLIST*** BELIEVES ***ANYONE*** CAN BE GREAT BUT ONLY ***SOME*** OF US CAN PUSH PAST OUR ***DOUBTS*** TO MAKE IT HAPPEN.

AND MY ***THERAPIST*** TOLD ME TO ***VISUALIZE*** THE SUCCESS I WANT AND THEN STEP UP TO ***MEET IT*** WITH MY ***ARMS OPEN.***

SERIOUSLY?

ALL THIS ***SHIT*** YOU'RE SAYING...IT DOESN'T MEAN ***ANYTHING.***

LIFE ISN'T A FUCKING ***FORTUNE COOKIE.***

I WAS TRYING TO BE ***NICE***...

I FIGURED IT OUT.

FIGURED WHAT OUT?

WHERE I'VE SEEN YOU BEFORE...

YOU PLAYED ***CEE-LIN*** ON ***SPACE FARERS***, RIGHT? THE ***PSYCHIC?***

ACTUALLY, ***YEAH.*** THAT WAS ME.

I LOVED WATCHING THAT SHOW... WHEN I WAS ***EIGHT.***

NO ***WONDER*** YOU'RE HAVING TROUBLE LANDING A PART. YOU'RE FUCKING ***ANCIENT...***

OKAY, GIRLS. SORRY FOR THE ***DELAY.***

NORMALLY WE'D DO ***CALLBACKS***, BUT WE'RE IN A BIT OF A ***RUSH*** SO WE'RE GONNA DO SECOND READINGS ***RIGHT NOW.***

SO, HERE'S WHO I NEED...

LISA MARKOWSKI...

...SARAH YUN...

...AND BROOKE VIXY.

TOLD YOU...

MY ARMS ARE ***OPEN.***

BZZT BZZT
BZZT BZZT

Kaydon: Did you get the part?

Kaydon: Did you tell your agent about me?

Kaydon: Marty wants to know when youll be home. Soon right?

HEY, HEY...

HEY *LADY*...

GOT *CHANGE?*

HELP ME OUT?

NO.

GO AWAY.

CELEBR'TY MAP... FAYMUS PEOPLE.

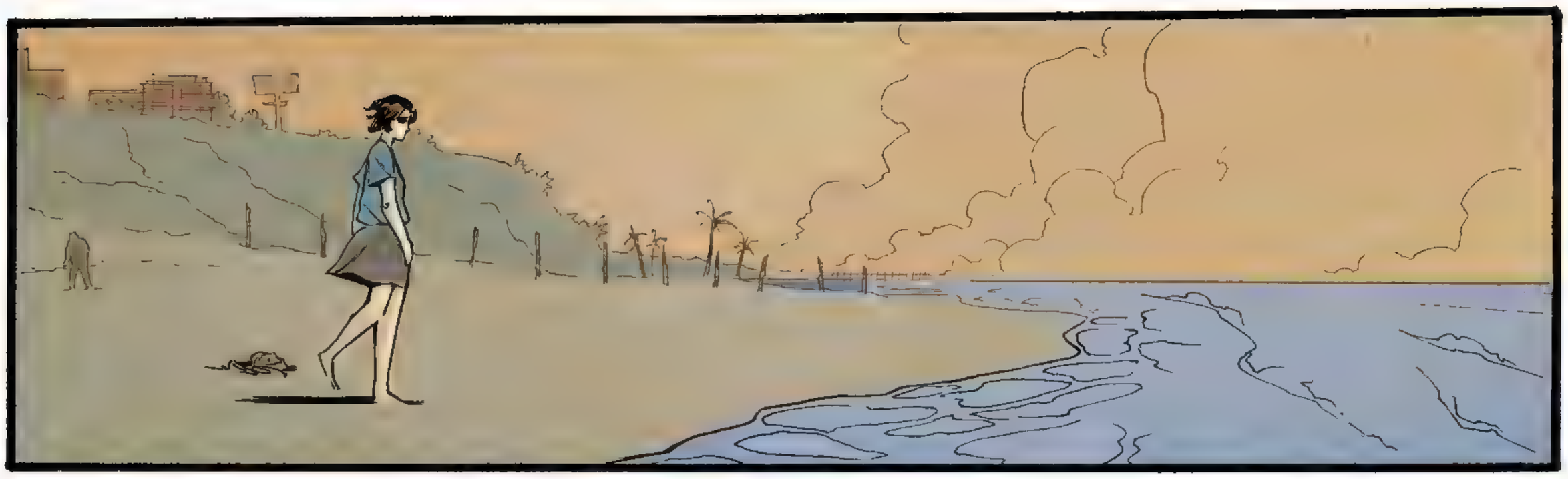
I *SELL* IT T' YA...

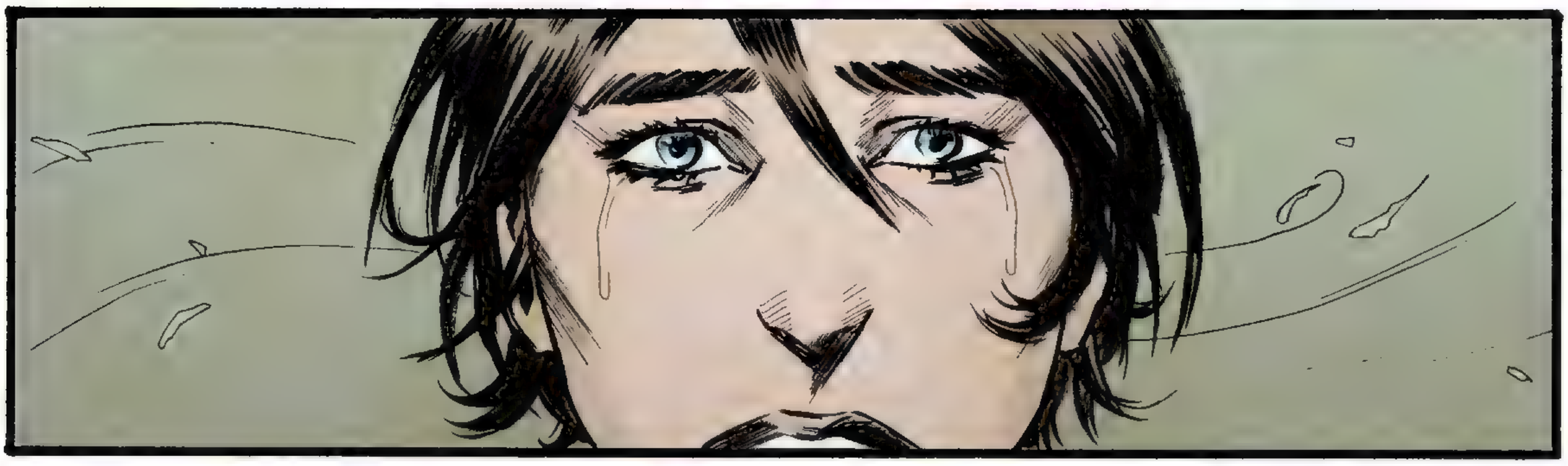
HOLD ON, HOLD ON...

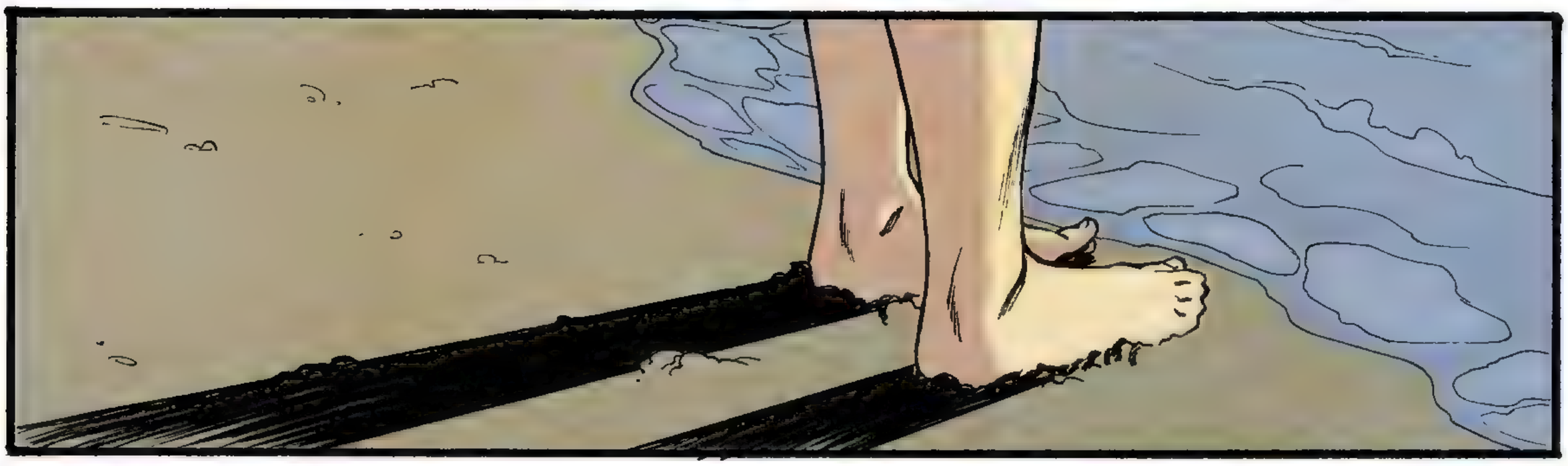
I GOT SUMTHIN'.

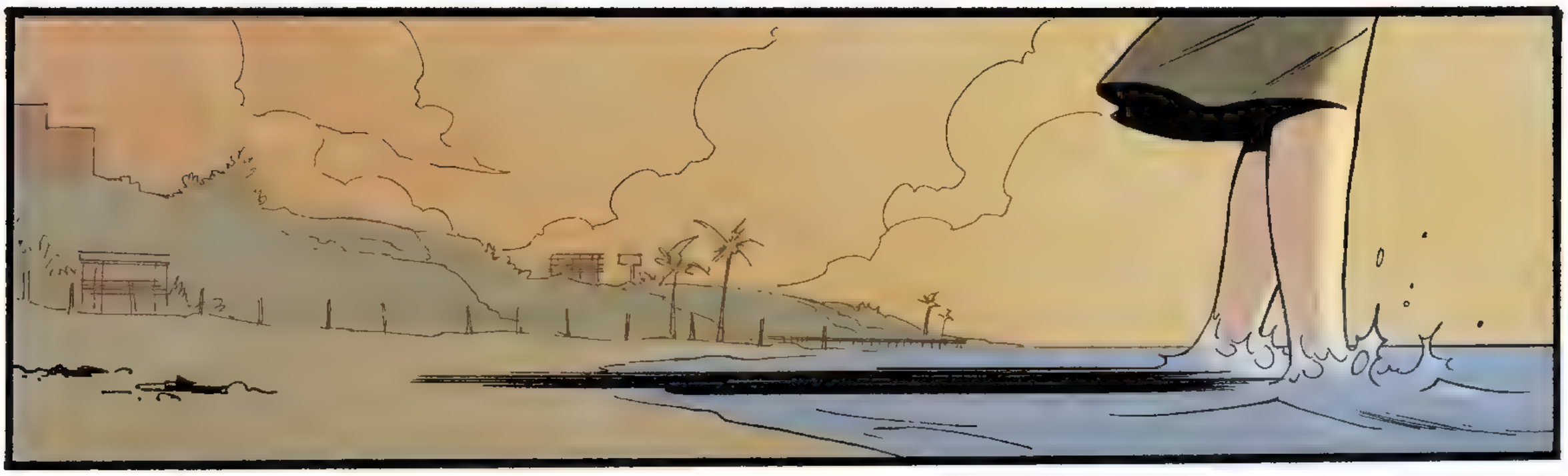
FUCK OFF, OKAY?

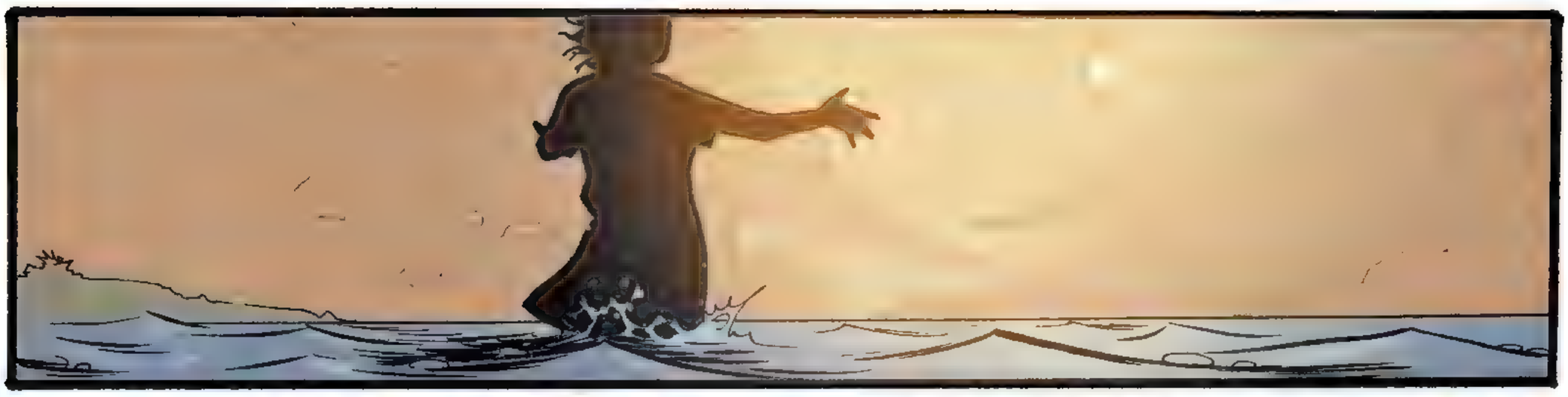
OKAY, OKAY...

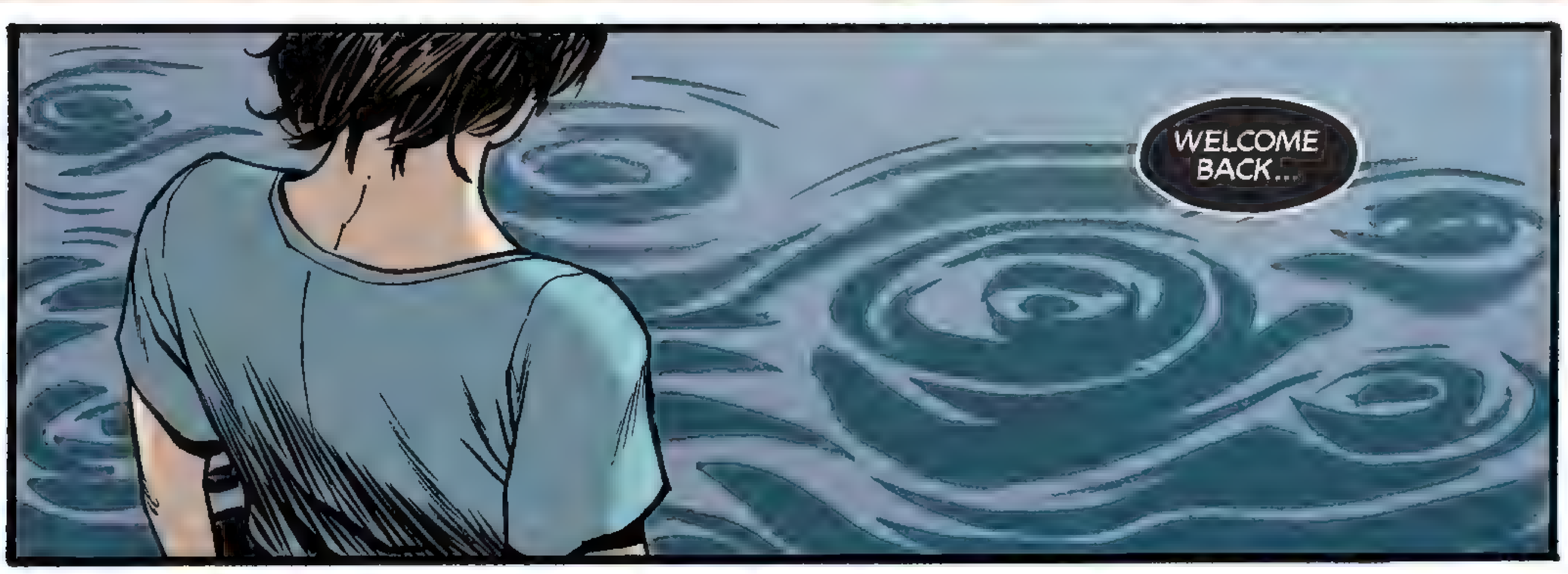


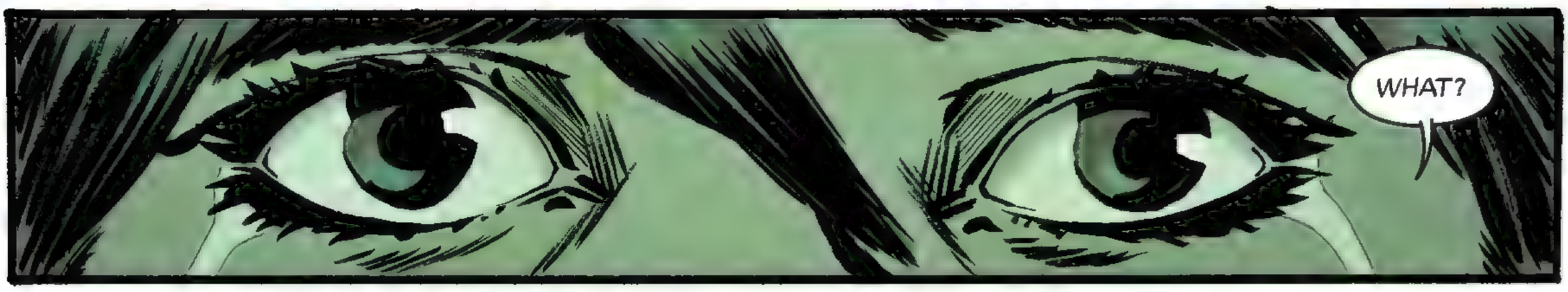


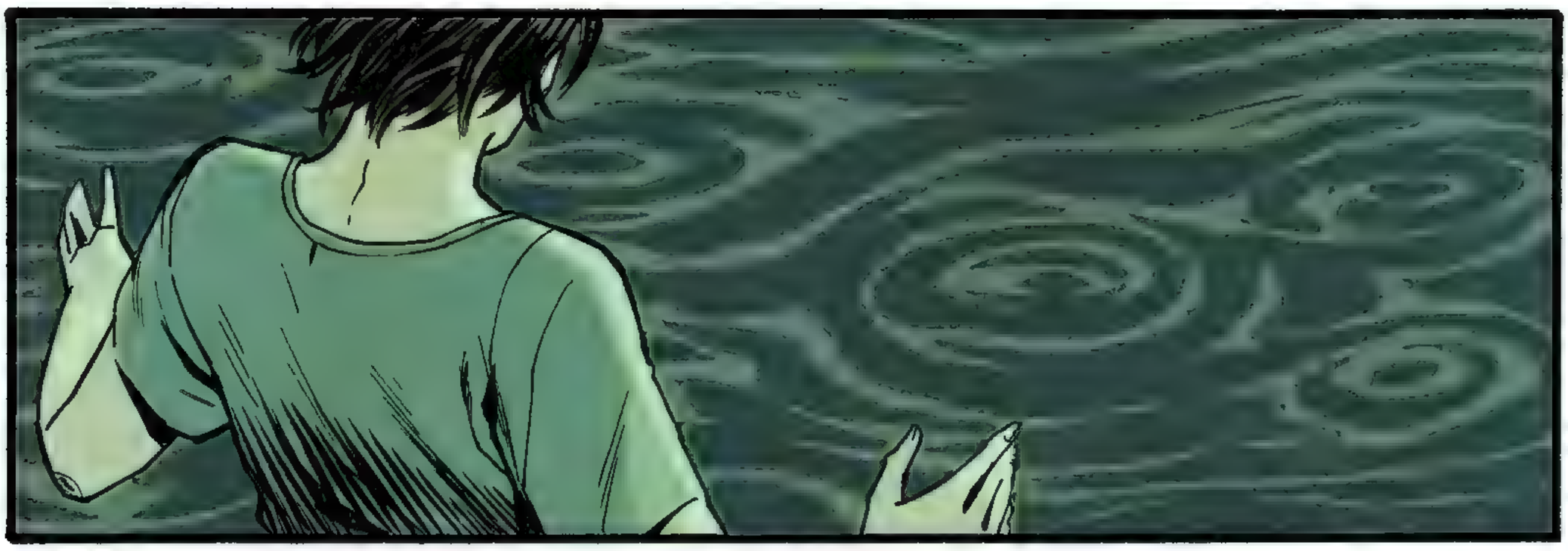


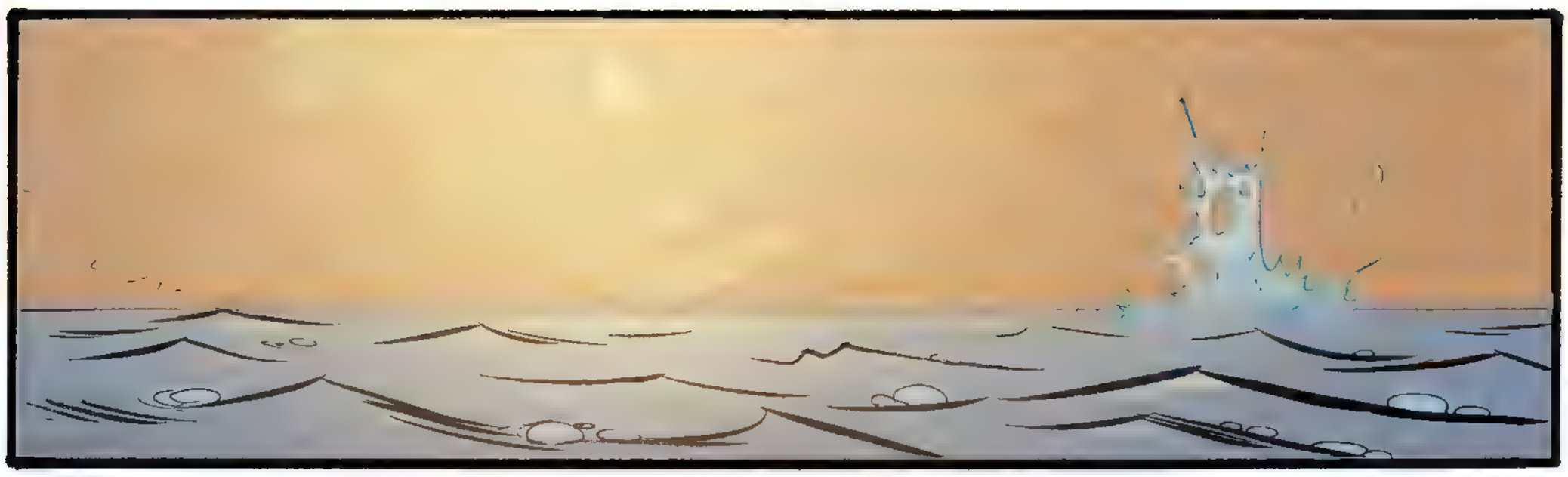





WELCOME BACK...


WHAT?





LOST.

ANGRY.

VULNERABLE.

SHOW ME YOUR PAIN.

GIVE ME SOMETHING TO DESTROY.

HUUUH

HUUUUH.

WUUUH--?

HEH...

THOUGHT YA GONE ***DROWN.***

COUGH COUGH

HUUH!!

STAY THERE. DOAN MOVE.

DOAN ***DIE.***

YA GOT ANYTHIN' ***GOOD?***

SHUKKA

clink

LADY PURSE ***ALWAYS*** GET GOOD STUFF...

MAKE-UP, GUM, TISSUES, ***WALLET...***

GOOD, GOOD, GOOD...

OHHHHH!!

A ***CAR!***

UUH...

I SAVE YA ***LIFE*** SO WE ***TRADE***, 'KAY?

HEH HEH HEH...

DIDYA ***PARK*** NEAR?

WHERE'S IT AT?

N'UH?!

SHLUNK

G'DNH!

CRUNCH

THERE ARE NO "FAMOUS PEOPLE"...

SHUNK

SHUNK

SHUNK

SHUNK

SHUNK

SHUNK

...IT'S ALL JUST MEAT!

SHLOOOOOOOOOP

?

SHLIP

--THE FUCK?

YOUR MOMMA'S IN SHIT, SON.

♪MOMMA'S IN SHIT. MOMMA'S IN SHIT.♪

BONK BONK BONK

UH... I MEAN "*POOP*," OKAY?

STOP SAYING THE ***OTHER*** WORD.

♪MOMMA POOP. SHITTY POOP.♪

BWEEP-BWEEP-BWEEP

FLAWLESS

OH GOOD, YOUR FOOD'S READY...

DINO CHICKEN TENDERS!

THE DINOSAURS IN *JURASSIC WORLD* AREN'T ***REALLY*** DINOSAURS.

NO?

REAL DINOSAURS HAD ***FEATHERS*** ALL OVER THEIR BODY LIKE BIRDS. THEY WERE ***BIG BIRDS!***

HOLY CRAP, MARTY, S'THAT MEAN ***BIG BIRD*** ON *SESAME STREET* IS REALLY A ***DINOSAUR?!***

HA HAHAHA ***HAHA!!***

BIG BIRD ATTACK!

LAWLESS

TAK TAK TAK

Kaydon: Marty wants to know when youll be home. Soon right?

Kaydon: Ive got places to be so let me know whats going on k?

Kaydon: Helo? WTF Farrah.

Kaydon: You btter not be dead cause Im not raising this kid for you

SNIFF SNIFF

D'YOU JUST POOP YOURSELF?

NO...

YOU DID, DIDN'T YOU?

NNNNNOOO...

KA-CLICK

MOMMY!

HEY, BABY...

OH MY *GOD*, FARRAH, ARE YOU *OKAY?!*

YEAH, KAYDON, I'M FINE... *FINE.*

MOMMY!

IT'S, UH, IT'S KIND OF EMBARRASSING... I GOT A MAJOR NOSEBLEED...

N-NOSE-BLEED?

YEAH.

MESSED UP MY SHIRT. *RUINED* THE AUDITION...

FLAWLESS

THAT REALLY *SUCKS.*

WAIT A SEC...

WHERE THE *FUCK* YOU BEEN?! WE WAITED *FIVE HOURS!*

YOU LEFT ME BABYSITTING MARTY WITHOUT *ANY* COMMUNICATION! I HAD PLACES TO *BE!*

I KNOW. I JUST...

MOMMY- *SPAGHETTI FACE!*

IT'S...IT'S *COMPLICATED.* THE WHOLE THING GOT *MESSED UP,* OKAY? I'M *REALLY* SORRY!

I'LL PAY YOU *DOUBLE* FOR THE TIME.

CAN WE HAF *SPAGHETTI* FOR *DINNER?*

SIGH

FINE. BUT YOU BETTA HAVE CASH *RIGHT NOW.*

I... I *DON'T.*

I'LL DROP IT OFF *TOMORROW.* I *PROMISE.*

YOU DON'T GOT *FIFTY BUCKS?* WHERE'S ALL YOUR *HOLLYWOOD MONEY?*

SPA-GEH-

WHEN I *FIND* SOME I'LL LET YOU KNOW...

--TEEEEE--!

W'AAAHH--!!

W'AAH! WAH! WAHH!

IT'S OKAY, BABY. JUST A LITTLE SCARE. YOU'RE NOT HURT. IT'S OKAY...

GODDAMN, FARRAH, THAT WAS A HELL OF A CATCH...

YOU SHOULD TRY OUT FOR THE FUCKIN' RAIDERS OR SOMETHIN'...

SNIFF SNIFF

CAN YOU *HOLD* HIM? THAT'S MY *PHONE* BUZZING...

BZZT BZZT BZZT BZZT

OH SURE, *NOW* YOU ANSWER TH' PHONE!

HELLO?

MRS. DURANTE?

MISS... PLEASE USE *"MISS."*

SURE. *SORRY* 'BOUT THAT...

THIS IS *MR. TULDER'S* OFFICE CALLING, MISS DURANTE. *ROGER* WANTS TO MEET WITH YOU THIS AFTERNOON.

ARE YOU SERIOUS? I...IT'S NOT A GOOD TIME RIGHT NOW.

IT'S IMPORTANT. HE'S QUITE INSISTENT.

YEAH?

YEAH.

I'LL...I'LL BE RIGHT THERE. GIMME LIKE *FORTY-FIVE MINUTES* TO CLEAN UP AND GET THROUGH *TRAFFIC*, OKAY?

THAT'S *FINE.*

CLICK

YOU...DID... NOT JUST DO THAT...

YOU. DID. NOT!

BOUNCE, BOUNCE...

IT'S NOT MY CHOICE, OKAY?!

MY AGENT NEEDS TO SEE ME, KAYDON! I...I HAVE TO GO!

WHAT ABOUT WHAT I WANT, FARRAH?!

WHAT ABOUT MARTY?!

I'LL GIVE YOU A HUNDRED BUCKS WHEN I GET BACK!

I'LL PUT IT IN A THANK YOU CARD AND WRAP IT UP WITH A FUCKING BOW!

HMMMM...

BETTER IDEA!

I'VE ASKED YOU A ***MILLION TIMES*** TO ***INTRODUCE ME*** TO YOUR ***AGENT.***

NOW YOU GOTTA PAY ***UP!***

Fuuuuck...

A ***HUNDRED BUCKS*** AND AN ***INTRODUCTION!*** THAT'S TH' DEAL!

SIGH

C'mon...

FINE. I'LL DO IT.

YES!

MOMMY, ***DON'T*** GO...YOU JUST ***GOT*** HERE!

I'M SO ***SORRY***, BABY. I WON'T BE LONG AND WHEN I GET BACK WE'LL HAVE ***SPAGHETTI*** OR ***WHATEVER*** YOU WANT.

CAKE?

SURE.

TEXT ME THIS TIME...

I WILL.

GOOD LUCK.

THANKS.

TODAY'S BEEN...I DON'T EVEN KNOW... JUST...

...CONFUSING... ***WEIRD...***

"...BUT I'VE GOT A ***GOOD FEELING*** ABOUT THIS.

"SOMETHING ***BIG*** IS COMING MY WAY..."

PART 2: 24-7, 365

OKAY, **BROOKE...**

FORGIVE ME FOR SOUNDING A BIT **OBTUSE** BUT YOU **GOT** THE PART, SO WHAT'S **WRONG?**

IT SHOULD BE **ALL GOOD**, RIGHT?

LIKE, I SHOULD BE **FREAKING OUT** BECAUSE I WENT IN THERE AND GOT WHAT I **WANTED**, BUT...

...BUT I'M **NOT.**

WE TALKED ABOUT THIS... IT'S CALLED "**IMPOSTER SYNDROME.**"

A **GUILTY FEELING** THAT YOU'RE NOT QUALIFIED OR CAPABLE, THAT WHAT YOU HAVE ISN'T **EARNED** AND PEOPLE WILL REALIZE YOUR FOIBLES AND TEAR YOU DOWN.

UH... WHAT THE FUCK ARE "**FOIBLES**"?

YOUR **WEAKNESSES, FAILINGS...**

OH, OKAY.

"NO, IT'S NOT **IMPOSTER** STUFF. NOT LIKE THAT.

"IT WAS THIS OTHER ACTRESS... **FARRAH-** SOMETHING..."

SHE...I RECOGNIZED HER FROM AN OLD SCI-FI SHOW AND WE TALKED FOR A BIT.

HONESTLY? SHE LOOKED LIKE ***SHIT.***

SHE WAS TIRED AND PISSED OFF. KINDA ***SAD.***

I DIDN'T WANT HER ***NEGATIVITY*** TO ***INFLUENCE*** ME, SO I TRIED TO ***ENCOURAGE*** HER...GIVE HER SOME OF MY ***POSITIVE SPIRIT.***

AND HOW'D THAT GO?

WELL, THAT'S JUST IT...

"IT JUST SET HER ***OFF.***

"SHE GOT REALLY PISSED, TOLD ME I WAS ***DUMB.***"

THAT'S CLEARLY JEALOUSY.

SHE COULD SENSE YOUR ***CONFIDENCE.*** SHE KNEW THAT PART WAS YOURS THE SECOND YOU WALKED IN THE DOOR.

HEH--THANKS.

I MEAN, THAT'S FINE AND ALL BUT THAT'S ***NOT*** WHAT BOTHERED ME.

ALL I COULD THINK WAS SHE KINDA LOOKED LIKE *ME.*

LIKE, MAYBE IN TWENTY YEARS I'LL BE WHERE SHE IS...WASHED UP AND FUCKING LOSING MY MIND.

I KNOW MY *BOOBS* ARE GONNA *DROP* AND I'LL GET *WRINKLES* WHEN I'M OLD, BUT I DON'T WANNA BE *THAT,* Y'KNOW?

BE *WHAT,* EXACTLY?

WHAT DO YOU THINK SHE IS?

I DON'T KNOW...

JUST... *"HOLLOW."*

"HOLLOW?"

"YEAH.

"SHE LOOKED AT ME AND THERE WAS NOTHING INSIDE BUT *ANGER..."*

"...LIKE AN *EMPTINESS* YOU COULD *NEVER FILL.*"

PRETTY FUCKED UP EH, ISAAC?

IT'S *SOME-THING...*

OKAY, SO THE FIRST WITNESS ON THE SCENE IS HERE?

YEAH. HER NAME'S ***FARRAH DURANTE.***

SHE WAS HIS FOUR O'CLOCK.

SORRY TO KEEP YOU ***WAITING,*** MS. DURANTE.

IT'S OKAY. I FIGURE YOU GUYS ARE PRETTY BUSY.

YOU FIGURE ***CORRECT.***

I'LL TRY AND MAKE THINGS QUICK.

I'M DETECTIVE ***ISAAC RAHAL.*** I'M HANDLING THIS CASE.

NICE TO MEET YOU.

LET'S START WITH THE ***BASICS...***

DID YOU ***KILL ROGER TULDER?***

WOW, THAT'S QUITE THE FUCKING ***ICE-BREAKER...***

YOU DON'T WASTE ANY ***TIME***, DO YOU?

IN MY EXPERIENCE, IT'S BEST TO JUST GET RIGHT TO THE POINT.

ROGER WAS A ***TERRIBLE*** AGENT AND AN ALL-AROUND ***ASSHOLE.***

IF I ***COULD*** HAVE KILLED HIM I PROBABLY ***WOULD*** HAVE...

THAT'S QUITE THE STATEMENT.

OKAY, BUT ***SERIOUSLY...*** I CAME IN TO TALK ABOUT RENEWING MY CONTRACT. I WALKED IN AND THERE WAS BLOOD ALL OVER THE PLACE.

CLEARLY SOMEONE ELSE WASN'T THRILLED WITH HIM EITHER...

YOU'RE TAKING THIS IN ***STRIDE.*** THAT DIDN'T FREAK YOU OUT?

DETECTIVE, I LIVE IN ***OAKWOOD.*** I SEE CRIME SHIT ***ALL*** THE TIME.

FAIR ENOUGH.

HERE'S WHAT BUGS ME, MS. DURANTE...

"SOMEONE WALKED IN THE DOOR, BEAT THE ***LIVING HELL*** OUT OF MR. TULDER, AND THEN DRAGGED HIS PRESUMABLY ***UNCONSCIOUS BODY*** AWAY WITHOUT ***ANYONE*** IN THE OFFICE NOTICING..."

"YOU THINK HE WAS ***KIDNAPPED?***"

"KIDNAPPED, ***KILLED...***

"...***WHATEVER*** HAPPENED, HE'S NOT ***HERE.***

"HMMM..."

"SO, UNLESS YOU KNOW HOW TO HIDE A ***THREE-HUNDRED-POUND LOUDMOUTH EXECUTIVE*** IN FIFTEEN MINUTES OR LESS, I'M AT A BIT OF A ***LOSS.***"

"LIKE I TOLD YOU, BLOOD WAS *EVERYWHERE*.

"I KNEW IT WAS *BAD NEWS*.

"NOT SURE WHAT ELSE TO SAY...

"...I JUST WANTED TO GET OUT OF THERE."

NOW I JUST WANT TO GET *HOME*.

OKAY, MS. DURANTE, THAT'S IT FOR NOW.

I CAN LEAVE?

YEAH. WE'VE GOT YOUR ***CONTACT INFO***, SO IF I HAVE ANY MORE QUESTIONS I'LL BE IN TOUCH.

HOW'D IT GO?

A BIT WEIRD, BUT OKAY.

SHE'S A BETTER ACTRESS THAN I EXPECTED.

IS THIS EVEN HAPPENING?

Dean Slotkin

HELLO, FARRAH?

HEY...

I THINK I'M *LOSING MY MIND.*

I'LL BE RIGHT OVER.

BWIP

FUCK!

IT'S FUCKIN' ***BULLSHIT!***

FEARLESS

KAYDON?

KAYDON, IT'S ***DEAN.*** REMEMBER? I'M FARRAH'S FRIEND.

HA!

WELL, COUNT ME OUTTA FARRAH'S "***FRIEND CLUB***" 'CAUSE SHE JUST ***FUCKED ME OVER!***

ANY TIME SHE ASKS I LOOK AFTER ***MARTY.***

I ***WATCH*** HIM, ***FEED*** HIM, MAKE SURE HE GETS ***VITAMINS*** AND SHIT...***ALL*** OF IT.

I'M ***BLACK MARY POPPINS*** FOR THAT KID, Y'KNOW?!

SHE FUCKED OFF ALL DAY FOR ACTING, ***PROMISED*** SHE'D PAY ME...

NOTHIN'... NOTHIN'!

SHE...SHE ***FORGOT*** OR WHATEVER...

I'M A ***CHUMP.***

LOOK, I'M ***SURE*** SHE DIDN'T MEAN IT LIKE THAT.

SHE'S...YOU KNOW SHE'S BEEN THROUGH A LOT.

I KNOW SHE APPRECIATES ALL YOU DO.

HOW MUCH DOES SHE OWE YOU?

MAN, YOU SHOULD ***NOT*** BE FLASHING THAT CASH 'ROUND HERE. YOU'RE GONNA GET ***WORKED...***

YEAH, YEAH. HOW MUCH?

IT'S... UH...

...HUNDRED AN' FIFTY...

TAKE IT.

NO, I--

DON'T GIVE UP ON HER, OKAY?

Okay.

FLAWLESS

KNOCK KNOCK

MARTY JUST FELL ASLEEP.
GOT IT...

BEER?
SURE.

clink

OKAY, LADY, WHAT'S GOING ON?

I DON'T EVEN KNOW HOW TO EXPLAIN IT.

TODAY WAS JUST...

...GONE.

"GONE"? I'VE BEEN POPPING IN AND OUT OF MY HEAD FOR ***HOURS***. THINGS NOT MAKING ***SENSE***...

HARD TO EXPLAIN IT. IT'S LIKE I'M ***WATCHING*** A HORROR MOVIE BUT ***STARRING*** IN IT TOO.

JUST ***AWFUL***.

OKAY...

CAN YOU...CAN YOU BE A BIT MORE ***SPECIFIC?***

I DIDN'T GET THE PART TODAY. THE AUDITION WAS A ***DISASTER***.

AFTER THAT, IT'S A JUMBLE OF ***CONFUSION*** PUNCTUATED WITH FLASHES OF PURE FUCKING ***HATE***.

I BARELY REMEMBER GETTING ***HOME***...

FARRAH...

...I DON'T KNOW HOW ELSE TO SAY THIS, BUT...

...ARE YOU DROPPING ***ACID*** AGAIN?

WHAT?!

NO... NO!

I COULD GET IN TOUCH WITH SOME **DOCTORS** WHO SPECIALIZE IN **ADDICTION** AND--

OH, JESUS... THIS ISN'T ABOUT **DRUGS**, OKAY?!

SOMETHING **TRAUMATIC** HAPPENED AND I DON'T KNOW HOW TO **PROCESS** IT--

GRAB

LOOK, I'M **SERIOUS.**

IF...IF YOU HAD A **RELAPSE**, THERE'S NOTHING TO BE **ASHAMED** OF. I DON'T MIND PAYING FOR **TREATMENT** OR--

CRESH

HOLY SHIT, FARRAH! YOU--

SHUT YOUR FUCKING MOUTH AND LISTEN TO ME.

I DON'T NEED A GODDAMN HANDOUT OR MISGUIDED JUNKIE SYMPATHY...

I CAN FINALLY *SEE* WHAT WE'VE ALL BEEN SUCKED INTO...THIS WHIRLPOOL OF *FAME* AND *DESIRE*...

WANTING... CONSUMING... *AFRAID*...

A *GAPING BLACK HOLE* INSIDE US, PULLING EVERYTHING *DOWN*.

IT NEEDS TO BE *FED*, DEAN. IT...

Nrng

FARRAH?

GET OUT!!

JUST... LEAVE... PLEASE...

I--I'M SORRY. I...

SLAM

WAAAAAH!

Goddamn...

WAAAAH!

MARTY... *MARTY!* JUST GIVE ME A SEC HERE...

HEY, BABY, WHY ARE YOU *CRYING?* WHAT'S WRONG?

I HEARD A *MONSTER ROAR...*

SCARED ME.

WELL, MOMMA'S HERE NOW.

Good.

YOU LIE DOWN WHILE MOMMA WATCHES A BIT OF TV, OKAY?

'kay.

BWIP

--AND SO, WITH COURAGE SET, WE TRAVEL FORTH BEYOND THE STARS...

SPACE FARERS

"...IN SEARCH OF *GRAND ADVENTURE!*"

...IN SEARCH OF *GRAND ADVENTURE!*

OH, *JESUS*... WHICH ONE IS IT *THIS* TIME?

I DON'T THINK I CAN DO THIS...

IT'S... IT'S *TOO MUCH!*

YOU MUST STAY *CALM*, CEE-LIN!

NUUUUUUUHH!

IT *FEEDS* ON YOUR EMOTIONS! IF YOUR FRAGILE HUMAN MIND TIPS OUT OF BALANCE, YOU COULD *DESTROY US ALL!*

The Host Within - Part 2

WHAT DO YOU MEAN CEE-LIN'S BEEN... *CHANGED?*

I'VE RUN THE SCANS *THREE TIMES*, RAY. IT'S NOT AN *INFECTION* AFTER ALL...

DON'T BE SO DAMN *SELFISH*, WOMAN! THINK OF WHAT WE COULD *LEARN* FROM IT!

THAT CREATURE HAS AS MUCH RIGHT TO LIFE AS *YOU*, OR *ME*, OR *ANYONE ELSE* ON THIS SHIP!

ACK-ACK!

ALL MUST *PAY* FOR THEIR *SINS*, DOCTOR GLASS...

...THE *SINS OF A HUNDRED STARS!*

...THERE'S SOMETHING ELSE *INSIDE* HER.

I CAN *FEEL IT*, DOCTOR...

A *PRESENCE FROM WITHIN* REACHING OUT TO TOUCH MY MIND...

BWIP

TROUBLE IN TINSEL TOWN! ANOTHER CELEBRITY ***BREAKUP.***

Hollywood Gossip

BWIP

WHEN WAS THE LAST TIME YOU FELT GOOD? ***REAL*** GOOD?

WHAT YOU NEED IS--

BWIP

--***FAME*** AND ***FORTUNE,*** HOLLYWOOD-STYLE--

BWIP

--AVAILABLE AT ***ROCK-BOTTOM PRICES!***

BUY NOW! DON'T DELAY!

BWIP

TRUST IN ***FAITH*** AND TAKE--

BWIP

--A JUICY, MOUTH-WATERING ***BITE***--

BWIP

--OF THE ***AMERICAN DREAM.***

STRUT YOUR STUFF ON STAGE--

Li'l Divas

BWIP

--THEN EAT A BOWL OF ***MAGGOTS!***

CA$H COURAG

BWIP

TWENTY-FOUR-SEVEN. 365 DAYS A YEAR--

BWIP

PART 3: MAKING A NEST

KAYDON.

MMM?

HOW LATE WERE YOU UP, GIRL?

I DUNNO. ***LATE.***

JANEEN TOLD ME THERE'S A JOB OPENIN' IN ***PRODUCE***. YOU SHOULD APPLY.

PART-TIME START, BUT YOU KNOW HOW IT IS. SOONER YOU GET IN, BETTER SENIORITY.

MOM, I GOT A JOB...AND, EVEN IF I DIDN'T, THERE IS ***NO WAY*** I'M WORKIN' AT YOUR STORE.

"***MY*** STORE"...

IF IT ***WAS*** MY STORE I'D HAVE YOU IN THERE SCRUBBIN' FLOORS LIKE THOSE ***MEXICAN*** BOYS TWICE A WEEK. TEACH YOU TO WORK YOUR ***ASS OFF.***

BABYSITTIN' FOR THAT WASHED-UP ACTRESS AIN'T A JOB. YOU'RE ***BETTER*** THAN THAT.

BETTER THAN ***PRODUCE*** TOO...

HMMPH!

'SIDES, SHE AIN'T WASHED UP. FARRAH'S DOIN' ALL KINDS OF STUFF.

AN'... AN' TEACHIN' ME ***ACTING*** TOO!

THAT SO?

MMM-HMM.

ACTIN' ***UP*** IS DIFFERENT FROM ACTIN' ***OUT.***

DOES SHE EVEN ***PAY*** YOU?

HELL YEAH!

SHE WAS ***LATE*** YESTERDAY AN' GAVE ME ***$150*** JUST 'CAUSE SHE FELT BAD.

WELL, SHIT...

THEN WHEN ARE YOU GONNA START PAYIN' ***RENT?!***

WHEN I'M EIGHTEEN... AN' A FAMOUS ACTRESS!

WH-WHAT?

WHAT'S WRONG?

YOU THINK ***YOU'RE*** THE ONLY ONE WITH ***DREAMS?***

YOU THINK I DIDN'T WANT MORE THAN DOIN' CHECKOUT AT ***FOOD-FRESH?***

YOU KNOW I DIDN'T MEAN IT LIKE THAT, MOM...

I'LL WORK HARD. MAKE YOU PROUD.

HARD WORK DON'T HELP WHEN YOU'RE PLAYIN' THE ***LOTTERY!***

WELL, YOU CAN'T WIN IF YOU DON'T PLAY.

ACTIN'... BEIN' ***FAMOUS.*** IT'S WHAT I ***WANT.***

THAT'S JUS' IT, GIRL. IT DON'T ***MATTER*** WHAT YOU WANT!

THE UNIVERSE DON'T GIVE A ***SHIT*** ABOUT YOU!

HOLLYWOOD DON'T GIVE A ***SHIT*** NEITHER!

AN' NO MATTER WHAT THAT WHITE BITCH SAYS, I ***GUARANTEE,*** PUSH COME TO SHOVE, SHE DON'T GIVE ONE ***DIRTY RAT-ASS--***

DING-DONG

H'LLO?

GOOD MORNING, MS. CLAY.

THIS ***WHITE BITCH*** IS HERE TO SEE IF KAYDON WANTS TO GO DOWNTOWN FOR ***LUNCH***.

I'VE GOT A ***LITTLE BEAST*** I NEED TO MAKE SURE GETS ***FED***.

GRRRR... GRRR...

KAYDIE... MOMMA AN' ME ARE ***MONSTERS!***

MY MOM DIDN'T MEAN WHAT SHE SAID BACK THERE, FARRAH. SHE WAS JUST ***MAD*** AN'--

DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT. SHE'S A MOTHER LOOKING OUT FOR HER DAUGHTER. I GET IT.

IMMA HUNNERD FEET TALL. RAAGH!

WHERE ARE WE GOING?

JUST A LITTLE LUNCH PLACE I THINK YOU'LL LIKE.

BLEEARGH...

I HAVEN'T BEEN DOWN HERE IN AGES.

IT ALWAYS FEELS THE SAME TO ME...***EXPENSIVE***, ***TACKY***, AND FULL OF ***DESPERATION***.

HOLY SHIT. THESE MEALS ARE LIKE A WEEK'S GROCERIES.

ARE YOU SURE YOU'RE OKAY WITH THIS?

YUP.

YUP.

HERE'S WHAT I OWE YOU FOR YESTERDAY, WITH LUNCH AS A BONUS FOR STRESSING YOU OUT.

UH, THANKS.

I DON'T WANNA SOUND ***UNGRATEFUL***, BUT...DID YOU GET A BIG ***CONTRACT*** OR SOMETHIN'?

WOULDN'T THAT BE GREAT?

UNFORTUNATELY, ***NO***. NOT EVEN CLOSE...

CAN I GET AN ***OLD CUBAN?***

SURE.

IN FACT THE LAST ROYALTY CHECK I GOT FOR *SPACE FARERS* WAS A WHOPPING ***$218***.

OUCH.

YUP. WHEN IT'S YOUR FIRST GIG YOU DON'T HAVE ANY POWER TO NEGOTIATE. YOU JUST TAKE WHAT THEY GIVE YOU AND SMILE.

WHAT CAN I GET YOU FOR LUNCH?

UM... I'LL JUST GET THE ***CHICKEN***.

I'LL HAVE THE ***GRILLED SEA BASS***. THE LITTLE DORK UNDER THE TABLE WILL HAVE THE ***MAC & CHEESE***.

THAT'S ***ME!***

OKAY, FARRAH. YOU'RE WEIRDING ME OUT. WHY'RE YOU IN A GOOD MOOD AN' BUYIN' LUNCH AN' ALL THAT?

LAST NIGHT I HAD AN ***EPIPHANY*** AND I WANT TO SHARE IT WITH YOU.

BUT LET ME ASK YOU SOMETHING FIRST--***WHY*** DO YOU WANT TO BE AN ACTOR?

I...WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

HAVE YOU EVER ACTED BEFORE? DO YOU HAVE SPECIFIC MATERIAL YOU WANT TO EXPLORE, THINGS YOU NEED TO EXPRESS?

NO, NOT EXACTLY, BUT I WAS HOPIN' YOU COULD ***TEACH*** ME SOME STUFF AN' THEN I COULD START WITH SOMETHIN' ***SMALL***...

LET ME ***REPHRASE*** THE QUESTION-- WHY DO YOU WANT TO BE ***FAMOUS?***

I KNOW THAT'S NOT THE POINT.

I KNOW IT'S NOT JUST GONNA HAPPEN...

I...

I WANNA BE ***IMPORTANT.***

I WANT TH' STUFF I DO TO MEAN SOMETHIN'.

EXACTLY.

DO YOU KNOW WHO ***LILLIAN GISH*** WAS?

WHO?

LILLIAN GISH. PROBABLY THE MOST FAMOUS ACTRESS IN SILENT FILMS. ONE OF THE GREATEST ACTORS OF ALL TIME.

A HUNDRED YEARS LATER, IS SHE ***IMPORTANT?***

I DUNNO, BUT I BET THAT CHICK WAS ***RICH***.

HERE'S THE REAL POINT...

THE MORE YOU WANT ***FAME*** AND ***FORTUNE***, THE MORE IT WILL ***EAT YOU ALIVE***.

EASY FOR ***YOU*** T' SAY.

I KNOW. I SPEAK FROM ***EXPERIENCE***.

WHAT'S GOING ON OVER THERE?

"SOMEONE'S ABOUT TO GET THEIR STAR ON THE *WALK OF FAME.*"

PALATIAL

OH, WOW!

LET'S GO CHECK IT OUT.

MOMMY, IS DAT A PARTY?

WE'VE HAD THE PLEASURE OF SEEING ***CLIFF STADDEN*** ON TV FOR MORE THAN ***TWENTY-FIVE YEARS...***

A QUARTER-CENTURY OF ***DRAMATIC EXCELLENCE***, RAISING THE BAR FOR WHAT GENRE TELEVISION IS CAPABLE OF.

YOU PROBABLY KNOW HIM BEST AS ***CAPTAIN R.L. CAVALIER*** FROM ***SPACE FARERS*** AND ***SPACE FARERS: 2099*** BUT HE'S EMBODIED MANY OTHER ICONIC ROLES AS WELL...

WAIT A SEC, YOU ***KNOW*** THIS DUDE?

DID YOU KNOW THEY WERE DOIN' THIS TODAY?

SHHH. I'M LISTENING TO THE CEREMONY...

...CLASS ACT...

...HERO ON- AND OFF-SCREEN...

...GRACIOUS...

...SUCH A BIG HEART...

...STILL SEARCHING FOR GRAND ADVENTURE!

WHAT'S GOIN' ON, MOMMA?

I WANNA SEE!

MARTY, STAY HERE WITH KAYDON.

WHERE YA GOIN'?

WHAT?!

FARRAH, WHAT TH' FUCK?!

BAD WORD IS BAD...

GET A PHOTO!

OMIGOD, I WOULD FUCK HIM RIGHT HERE.

TOO MANY PEOPLE.

I LOVE YOU, CLIFF!

HE SEEMS KINDA SHORT.

DON'T PUSH!

MA'AM! STOP!

SECURITY

STAY BEHIND THE BARRIER!

I'M CLIFF'S FRIEND.

SURE YOU ARE.

TELL HIM, CLIFF...

SIR?

SHE...

YEAH, IT'S OKAY. SHE'S A FRIEND.

HOLY SHIT. IS SHE *LEAVIN'* WITH HIM?

HI, CLIFF.

FARRAH...

WHAT THE ***HELL*** ARE YOU DOING HERE?

CONGRATS ON YOUR STAR AND ALL THAT.

NICE JOB.

THANKS, BUT IT'S NOT EVEN...IT'S... WHATEVER.

YOU KNOW HOW THIS SHIT WORKS. IT'S JUST ***PROMOTION.***

EVERYONE GETS ONE EVENTUALLY...

"EVERYONE"?

NO, NOT ***EVERYONE.*** I... I JUST MEAN, WHEN YOU GET TO THIS ***LEVEL.***

...

LOOK, I KNOW YOU'VE HAD A ROUGH GO OF IT AFTER...

AFTER I ***QUIT*** THE SHOW...

...BECAUSE ***YOU RUINED ME.***

ONE OF US HAD TO LEAVE AND IT CERTAINLY WASN'T GOING TO BE THE "CAPTAIN," NOW WAS IT?

EASIER TO JUST KILL OFF THE YOUNG GIRL AS A DRAMATIC SPEED BUMP IN THAT SEARCH FOR "GRAND ADVENTURE," RIGHT?

C'MON, FARRAH! THAT WAS TWENTY FUCKING YEARS AGO!

SHIT HAPPENED! GET OVER IT!

IT'S PRETTY EASY TO "GET OVER IT" WHEN YOU'RE CASHING IN THOSE FAT ROYALTY CHECKS, ISN'T IT?

IS THAT WHAT THIS IS ABOUT? MONEY?

NO.

IT'S A NEW ROLE I CHOSE FOR MYSELF, JUST LIKE YOU TAUGHT ME...

THIS ONE'S ALL ABOUT RESPECT AND FEAR AND FUCKING EMPTINESS.

YOU MADE THIS GIRL A VICTIM...A STATISTIC...

...YOU HOLLOWED OUT A HOLE FOR ME TO NEST IN.

Nnnn...

CLIFF!

IS HE COMING BACK OUT?

MOMMA, *MOMMA!*

KAYDIE SAID MORE BAD WORDS!

OH MY...

YOU WANT SOME *FROZEN YOGURT?*

UH...

YOGY! YOGY BERRY!

WELL, LET'S JUST KEEP THAT TO OURSELVES THEN, OKAY?

FARRAH... WHAT THE FUCK WAS THAT?!

WHAT... WHAT'D YOU DO?

NOTHING MUCH.

I JUST GAVE HIM A *PIECE OF MY MIND...*

WHO WAS THAT?
HUH?
N-NO ONE! IT WAS...NO ONE IMPORTANT...

OKAY, WELL WE'D BETTER GET MOVING IF WE'RE GONNA MAKE IT OVER TO UNIVERSAL IN TIME FOR THE JUNKET.
I...I'M NOT UP FOR IT.
WHAT? WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

DID I FUCKING STUTTER? I'M NOT UP FOR IT.
GET THE DRIVER TO TAKE ME HOME.

ALRIGHT THEN...
MAYBE NEXT TIME SAY SOMETHING BEFORE I RUN MY ASS OFF SETTING UP PRESS FOR YOU.

DON'T WORRY, YOU'LL STILL GET YOUR FUCKING COMMISSION!

Kissed me?

Crazy cunt...

What th--

GRK

KKKKTRR

YOU'RE GETTING TOO *HEAVY* FOR THIS, BABY.

No'umnot...

DID YOU HAVE FUN HANGING OUT WITH *KAYDON?*

MM-HMM.

GOOD.

I THINK KAYDIE SAYS EVERY BAD WORD EVER.

THAT SOUNDS LIKE A *LOT.*

MM-HMM.

MOMMA...

YES?

WHERE'S *MONEY* COME FROM?

WHAT'S THAT?

WHY DO SOME PEEPOH HAVE *LOTTA* MONEY AND OTHER PEEPOH HAVE *NO* MONEY?

SOME PEOPLE HAVE GOOD LUCK, I GUESS.

SO THEN WE GOT **BAD** LUCK?

BZZT BZZT
BZZT BZZT
BZZT BZZT

HELLO?

FARRAH, IT'S **DEAN.**

I...KNOW LAST NIGHT WAS AWKWARD AND YOU MIGHT NOT WANT TO TALK TO ME, BUT I'VE GOT SOME NEWS...

I KNOW YOU WEREN'T ON GOOD TERMS WITH HIM, BUT I JUST...I THOUGHT YOU SHOULD KNOW.

CLIFF...CLIFF STADDEN'S **DEAD.**

ARE YOU **SERIOUS?**

YEAH.

NOT A LOT OF DETAILS YET BUT APPARENTLY IT WAS SOME KIND OF *ATTACK*...

A LIMO DRIVER FOUND HIS MUTILATED BODY.

HARSH.

YEAH. REALLY FUCKED UP.

YOU KNOW HOW IT IS. EVERYONE JOCKEYING TO GET ON THE NEWS AND DELIVER A SOUND BITE OR GO VIRAL WITH PHOTOS AND STORIES.

SO, ANYWAY, HIS AGENT CALLED. THEY WANT TO PULL TOGETHER A RED CARPET CHARITY EVENT ON FRIDAY. HE WANTS THE *SPACE FARERS* GANG AND A BUNCH OF TINSELTOWN MUCKY-MUCKS THERE...

HE DIDN'T HAVE YOUR NUMBER SO I SAID I'D DROP YOU A LINE. I KNOW ALL THAT SHIT WENT DOWN BACK IN THE DAY, BUT I THOUGHT I'D AT LEAST LET YOU KNOW.

I'LL...I'LL JUST TELL HIM YOU'VE GOT OTHER STUFF HAPPENING THAT NIGHT AND--

WHO'S GONNA BE THERE?

UH...LIKE, ***EVERYONE.***

NOTHING BRINGS OUT THE STAR FUCKERS LIKE A TRAGEDY.

YUP.

OKAY. COUNT ME IN.

R-REALLY?

YEAH.

I JUST NEED TO FIND SOMETHING ***APPROPRIATE*** TO WEAR FOR THE ***BIG NIGHT...***

PART 4: PLAYING THE PART

STAGE
21

26 YEARS AGO-

STAGE 21

HUUAGH!

NICE ONE! GOOD WORKOUT FOR THE ABDOMINALS.

Wha--?

PUKING FROM STRESS IS A CLICHÉ, BUT I RESPECT THE EFFORT, Y'KNOW?

OH FUCK, MR. STADDEN... I'M *SORRY.*

"MR. STADDEN"? JESUS...

IT'S *"CLIFF."*

OKAY...SORRY, *CLIFF.*

I'M *FARRAH.*

LOOK... YOU'RE NERVOUS, YOUR GUTS ARE CHURNING...I GET IT, BUT THIS ROLE ISN'T GOING TO GET YOU WHAT YOU WANT.

"ROLE"?

SHIT, GIRL, YOU'RE LAYING THE ***INNOCENCE*** SHTICK ON ***HEAVY...***

I... I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU MEAN.

MM?

UH...NO, THANKS.

I MEAN, WE'RE ALL ***ACTORS***, RIGHT?

YEAH, BUT I'M JUST STARTING OUT. THIS IS MY BIG CHANCE.

NO, NO. I'M NOT TALKING ABOUT ACTING HERE ON THE SHOW, FARRAH. I MEAN ***EVERYWHERE!***

NO ONE IS ***GENUINE***. NO ONE ***BELIEVES*** THE SHIT THEY SAY.

EVERY SINGLE PERSON IS ***FAKING*** IT ALL THE FUCKIN' TIME. THEY JUST ACT HOWEVER THEY THINK WILL GET THEM WHAT THEY WANT.

YOU DECIDED TO PLAY THE "INNOCENT, CONFUSED GIRL IN THE BIG, BIG WORLD" AND YOU'RE HOPING SOMEONE WILL PITY YOU AND TAKE YOU UNDER THEIR WING.

LIKE YOU, RIGHT HERE...

WHAT? ***NO!***

DON'T LIE TO YOURSELF.

IF YOU WANTED YOU COULD BE STRONGER, MORE FORCEFUL, MORE CAPABLE.

YOU ***CHOSE*** THIS. YOU'RE MAKING IT HAPPEN.

I KNOW WHAT I WANT...

...AND I KNOW HOW TO ***GET*** IT.

I CAN SHOW YOU ALL KINDS OF ROLES WE COULD PLAY TOGETHER.

SOME OF THEM ARE ***SWEET...***

"...OTHERS ARE DOWNRIGHT *NASTY...*"

DOLBY THEATRE

A NIGHT FOR CLIFF

C'MON, FARRAH... DON'T LEAVE ME HANGING HERE...

HOLY SHIT, ARE YOU **DEAN SLOTKIN?**

UH... YEAH.

I LOVE **FAWKES PLACE** SO MUCH! YOU'RE **GREAT!**

BZZT BZZT BZZT

THIS IS FARRAH DURANTE. I'M NOT AVAILABLE TO TAKE YOUR CALL RIGHT NOW, BUT IF YOU...

CAN WE GET A **PHOTO** WITH YOU REAL QUICK?

UH, YEAH, I GUESS...

WOOOO!

KA-KLIK

FARRAH! CALL ME WHEN YOU GET THIS, I--

DON'T FREAK OUT. I'M RIGHT HERE.

GETTING MARTY AND THE SITTER SETTLED TOOK LONGER THAN USUAL.

YOU DIDN'T THINK I WAS GOING TO ***BAIL***, DID YOU?

NO, I JUST... I...

...YOU LOOK ***INCREDIBLE.***

THANKS.

ENJOY IT WHILE IT LASTS...

I KNOW THIS ISN'T YOUR THING.

SOMETHING LIKE THAT.

DETECTIVE RAHAL.

MS. DURANTE.

PLEASE RAISE YOUR HANDS FOR A MOMENT WHILE I DO A QUICK CHECK, OKAY?

OH, YOU ***KNOW*** EACH OTHER? I'M ***DEAN.*** I...

TERRIBLE NEWS ABOUT CLIFF STADDEN.

YEAH, BUT YOU WOULDN'T KNOW IT. THESE GUYS WILL USE ANY EXCUSE TO THROW A FUCKING PARTY.

WHAT BRINGS YOU HERE? NOT ENOUGH ***RENT-A-COPS*** TO HANDLE THIS?

I'M NOT HERE FOR ***SECURITY,*** FARRAH.

I FIGURED IT WOULD BE A GOOD PLACE TO MEET A BUNCH OF CLIFF'S FRIENDS. ASK A FEW ***QUESTIONS...***

WELL, THAT'S GOING TO BE QUITE A ***PROBLEM*** THEN.

YOU'RE GOOD TO GO.

CLIFF DIDN'T ***HAVE*** ANY FRIENDS...

MAN, THEY'RE NOT FUCKING AROUND WITH THIS...

OH, I'M OKAY ACTUALLY.

WHO SAID ANY OF IT WAS FOR *YOU*?

UH...

I'M ***KIDDING***, DEAN.

TAKE A FUCKING GLASS. WE'LL BOTH NEED IT WHEN THE OLD *SPACE FARERS* CREW COMES AROUND.

I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU SHOWED UP.

WALK AWAY WHILE YOU'VE STILL GOT SOME DIGNITY.

YEAH, WELL, I'M ***FULL*** OF SURPRISES.

HOLY SHIT, GIRL. LOOK AT US. WHERE'D THE ***TIME*** GO?

HE'S THE ***STAR POWER*** SO HE GETS TO ***PICK THE PUSSY***, RIGHT?

THAT'S THE ***PRICE OF DOIN' BUSINESS.***

YUP, I GUESS WE GOT ***OLD...***

FARRAH? *WHOA--YU LOOK FUCKIN' **HAWT!***

NICE PIECE OF ASS LIKE YOU, '***COURSE*** HE'S GONNA TRY THAT ON! I WOULD TOO IF Y' LET ME!

THANKS...

EH?! WHATCHA WANT?

CAN'T HEAR SHIT- ALL OVER THE NOISE...

WHAT WILL YOU DO, FARRAH, TELL THE ***COPS?***

YOU WON'T GET A CASE AND THE STUDIO WILL ***CRUSH*** YOU.

SORRY. MISTOOK YOU FOR SOMEONE ELSE.

EXCUSE ME WHILE I MINGLE.

THESE PARTIES ALWAYS STRESS ME OUT. WAY TOO MANY JERKS TRYING TO COP A FEEL.

KEEP A GLASS OF RED HANDY IN CASE YOU NEED TO *"OOPSIE"* ONE OF THOSE SHITHEADS WITH IT.

YOU'RE NOT ALONE.

NO OFFENSE, BUT THIS GODDAMN PARTY'S WHITER THAN COLONEL SANDERS AT A TOILET PAPER CONVENTION.

HEH.

I HATE THEM TOO.

FUCKERS THINK JUST 'CAUSE THEY'RE *RICH* THEY CAN DO WHATEVER THEY WANT.

MONEY CAN'T BUY SELF-RESPECT.

STAY STRONG.

EVER FEEL LIKE YOU ONLY GET INVITED TO FILL A FUCKIN' *QUOTA?*

WE'LL MAKE THEM PAY.

'SCUSE ME. IS THIS SEAT TAKEN?

HUH?

SO, DO YOU THINK FARRAH'S ACTUALLY A VILLAIN, OR IS SHE JUST DESPERATE?

WH-WHAT?

THE WASHED-UP OLD BITCH-- EVIL OR DESPERATE?

I THINK WE'RE **ALL** DESPERATE.

GOOD ANSWER.

LOOK, I'M ***SORRY*** FOR THAT SHIT I SAID AT THE AUDITION.

THAT ***WASN'T*** ME. I MEAN, IT ***WAS***, BUT--

DON'T APOLOGIZE. I KNOW ***EXACTLY*** WHERE THAT STUFF COMES FROM.

BROOKE, I'M GOING TO GIVE YOU SOME VERY IMPORTANT ADVICE...

WHEN SHIT STARTS TO GO DOWN, I WANT YOU TO GRAB THAT GUY AND GET OUT OF HERE, OKAY?

WH-WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

OH, YOU'LL SEE...

WILL WE SEE *MOMMA?*

HOLLYWOOD'S ELITE, RAISING FUNDS TO COMBAT CRIME IN CALIFORNIA IN HONOR OF ONE OF THEIR OWN.

OH, IT LOOKS LIKE THE SPEECHES ARE ABOUT TO START. FIRST UP IS CLIFF'S AGENT, MITCH ZHANG...

I DON'T KNOW, MARTY. FINGERS CROSSED.

THANK YOU ALL FOR COMING THIS EVENING.

I'M SURE CLIFF WOULD HAVE BEEN TOUCHED TO SEE SUCH AN INCREDIBLE TURNOUT HERE IN HIS HONOR.

FROM UP HERE I SEE SOME OF THE MOST ***POWERFUL*** PEOPLE IN HOLLYWOOD.

PRODUCERS, DIRECTORS, ACTORS... THE ***ENGINE*** THAT CREATES STORIES SEEN BY THE WHOLE WORLD. AWE INSPIRING...

AND THERE'S HARDLY A ***SOUL*** IN THIS ROOM WHO HASN'T BEEN ***TOUCHED*** BY CLIFF STADDEN'S ***INFLUENCE.***

THAT'S WHY WE'RE ALL HERE.

OH! I-IT'S... UH...*FARRAH DURANTE.*

THANKS...

MITCH IS *ABSOLUTELY RIGHT.* WE HAVE ALL BEEN *TOUCHED* BY CLIFF, HAVEN'T WE?

TOUCHED, FONDLED... GROPED, AND *ABUSED* BY CLIFF AND A HUNDRED OTHERS JUST LIKE HIM...

WE PUT OUR TRUST IN THESE PEOPLE, WE *IDOLIZE* THEM...

...AND BENEATH THEIR GLOSSY *OUTER SHELL* WE FIND SOMETHING *TERRIBLE* AND *HOLLOW.*

DO WE STOP HER?

FUCK, MAN, I DON'T KNOW. IS IT PART OF THE SHOW?

BUT WE LET IT HAPPEN AND PERPETUATE THE LIES BECAUSE OF A SIMPLE, SAD *TRUTH...*

WE'LL SAY ANYTHING...*DO* ANYTHING, JUST TO TRY AND HOLD ON TO A FLEETING MOMENT OF *ATTENTION.*

FROM UP HERE I SEE SOME OF THE MOST *SHALLOW* PEOPLE IN THE WORLD.

PRODUCERS, DIRECTORS, ACTORS... THE ENGINE THAT HELPS IMMORTALIZE A CULTURE THAT VALUES *FAME* OVER ANYTHING ELSE.

YOU SELL A DREAM OF SUCCESS AND ACT LIKE YOU *EARNED* IT, WHILE EVERYONE ELSE GETS TO FEEL SMALL AND INSIGNIFICANT.

THE *DESPAIR* OF NOT BEING ABLE TO GET WHAT YOU LORD OVER US FOREVER OUT OF REACH...

I SENSE HOW MANY OF THE OTHER PEOPLE HERE HAVE BEEN *USED* AND *MISTREATED* BY THESE ASSHOLES...

YOU'RE *LOST*.

ANGRY.

VULNERABLE.

I'VE SEEN YOUR *PAIN*...

...AND NOW IT'S TIME TO *SHARE* IT.

GET OUT, GET OUT!

WHAT IS IT?!

AHHHH!

JESUS-FUCKIN'-G'WAHHHH!

WE APOLOGIZE FOR THE ***INTERRUPTION*** AND ***COARSE LANGUAGE.***

IT APPEARS SOME KIND OF ***INCIDENT*** HAS BROKEN OUT AT THE THEATER.

WE HOPE TO HAVE MORE DETAILS SOON...

Wha...

What happened?

M-M-MARTY...

I WANT YOU TO STAY CALM, OKAY?

'KAY, KAYDON...

I'LL...

I'LL CALL YOUR MOMMA'S CELL AND MAKE SURE SHE'S SAFE.

YOU DON'T HAFTA.

WHAT? WHY?

MOMMA'S GONE.

D-DON'T SAY SHIT LIKE THAT!

Please pick up...

Please, please, please...

THAT'S THE WAY, KIDS...BLOOD, DEATH. SOME GOOD OLD-FASHIONED *EVISCERATION*...

AS LONG AS YOU DON'T SHOW ANY *TITS*, NO ONE WILL COMPLAIN...

FARRAH, YOU...YOU'VE GOT TO *STOP* THIS...

FARRAH?

FARRAH HASN'T BEEN HERE FOR A LONG *TIME*, DETECTIVE.

THIS BODY IS JUST PLAYING THE PART FOR ITS OWN AMUSEMENT...

...AN *ECHO* OF WHO SHE ONCE WAS.

A VESSEL OF VENGEANCE.

WH- WHAT THE FUCK *ARE* YOU?

ISN'T IT *OBVIOUS?*

I'M *FAMOUS.*

A NIGHT FOR CLIFF

I KNEW FARRAH WAS UPSET AND STUFF. BUT ALL THIS...IT'S JUST ***CRAZY.***

DID SHE EVER TALK ABOUT TAKING ***REVENGE?***

NOT REALLY. BUT SHE WAS ACTIN' ***WEIRD.***

WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY ***"WEIRD?"***

LIKE, ***DISTRACTED*** AN' STUFF...

MOOD SWINGS AN' →BEEP←.

DID SHE EVER ***THREATEN*** YOU?

NO! SHE WOULDN'T DO THAT.

WHAT ABOUT HER SON?

MARTY? NO. HE'S A GOOD KID. HE'S SO YOUNG AND--

WHERE'S MARTY NOW?

HAVE YOU BEEN QUESTIONED BY POLICE?

DID YOU EVER MEET FARRAH'S ACCOMPLICES?

HAVE THEY TRIED TO CONTACT YOU?

OKAY, OKAY... KAYDON'S ***DONE*** ANSWERING QUESTIONS.

ALL MEDIA REQUESTS HAVE TO GO THROUGH ME.

CALL ME AND MAYBE WE CAN ARRANGE AN EXCLUSIVE.

JACKIE, YOU *BITCH...*

THIS WAS YOUR *PLAN* ALL ALONG, WASN'T IT?

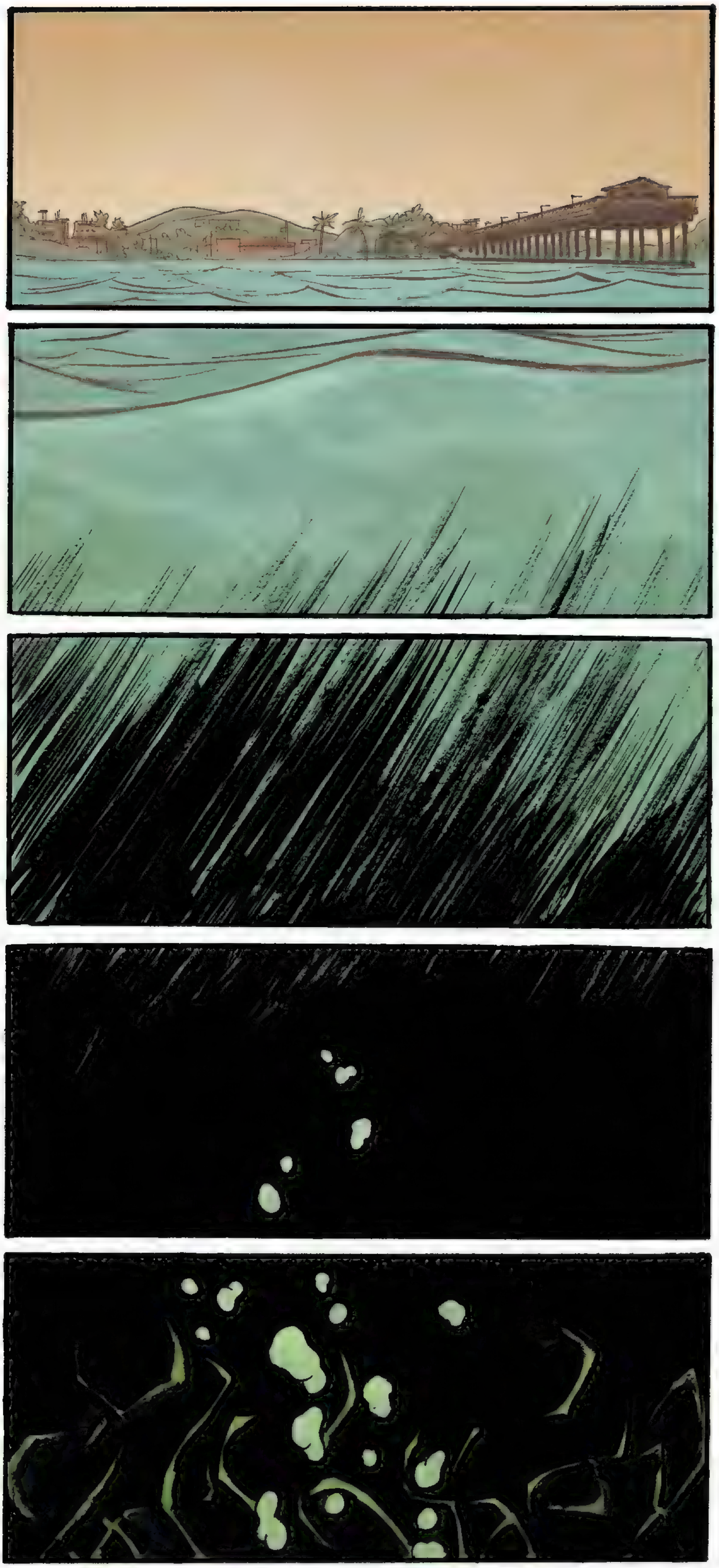
YOU THINK I WANTED THIS?

THIS ISN'T A STRATEGY, IT'S A *REACTION.*

THAT'S ALL LIFE IS--*CAUSE* AND *EFFECT.*

IF YOU LOAD A GUN, YOU CAN'T ACT SURPRISED WHEN SOMEONE PULLS THE TRIGGER.

BLAM



TO BE CONTINUED!

GLITTERBOMB #1 (Cover B)

Line Art by Steven Cummings. Colors by Djibril Morissette-Phan.

GLITTERBOMB #1 (Rose City Comic Con Cover)

Artwork by Christian Ward.

GLITTERBOMB #2 (Cover B)

Artwork by Marguerite Sauvage.

GLITTERBOMB #3 (Cover B)

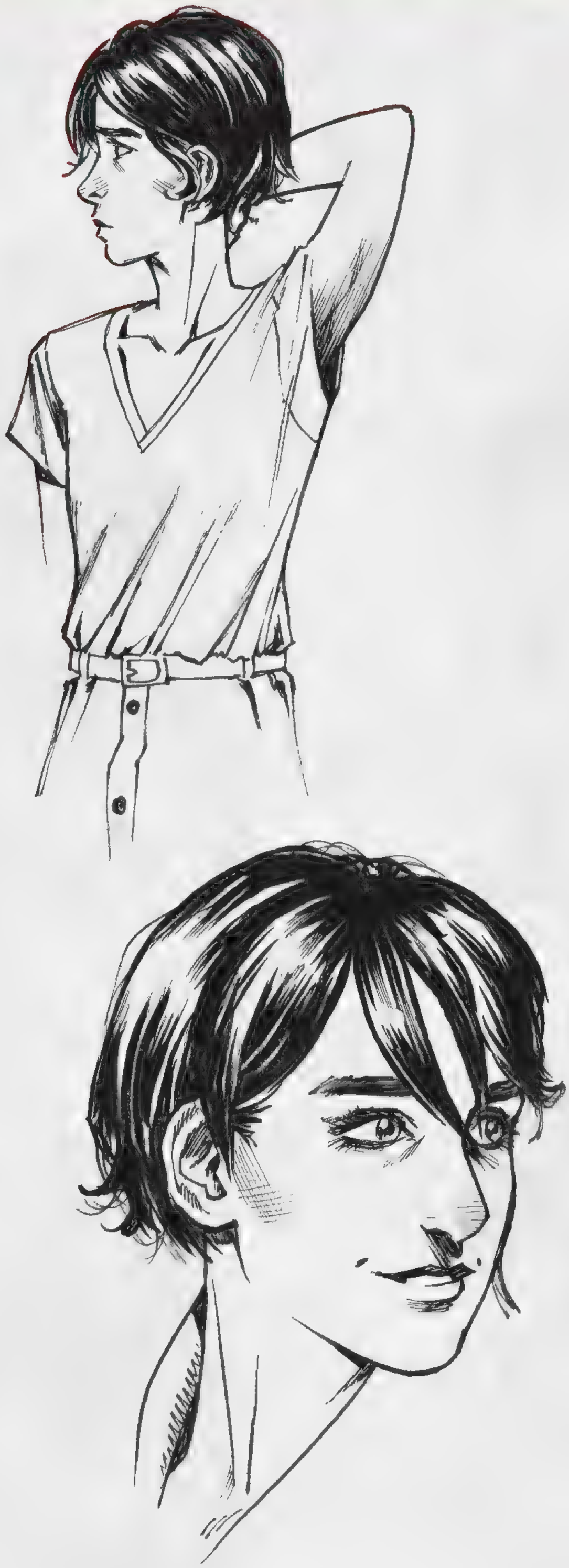
Artwork by Vivian Ng.

GLITTERBOMB #4 (Cover B)

Artwork by Trevor Jameus.

CHARACTER DESIGN SKETCHES

Art by Djibril Morissette-Phan. Notes by Jim Zub from his design document.



Farrah Durante: Our lead, a forty-three-year-old single mother trying to keep her disorganized Hollywood hopes together as they unravel around her. Her downward spiral collides with a strange creature that feeds on her emotional state and empowers her to take revenge.

Brooke Vixy: A twenty-year-old up-and-coming actress who has the skill and looks to make it big. She doesn't look the exact same, but there should be a sense that Brooke is like a younger version of Farrah, the actress she could have been if she'd had the drive and confidence early in her career and hadn't been abused and pushed to the sidelines. Brooke will be one of the focal points of Farrah's anger.

Isaac Rahal: A forty-six-year-old police officer of Arab descent, but he was born in America so that aspect of him is reflected in his skin tone and facial features but not clothes or attitude.

He's the detective in charge of the serial murder investigation that spins out of Farrah's killing spree. Isaac is intensely cynical and assumes the worst in people, which will serve him well as he digs through Hollywood's heartless fame machine to try and find out what's going on.

Kaydon Klay: A seventeen-year-old African-American girl from a struggling family who wants to be an actress. She babysits young Marty for Farrah and thinks she can help her get representation and break in to the acting business.

Kaydon is our way of showing a fame-seeker outside of the Hollywood system, someone who is going to get pulled into this maelstrom of ego and destruction.

Dean Slotkin: An old friend and confidant, as well as a far more successful actor, Dean wants to help Farrah but she keeps him at arm's length and, once the creature starts her on a path of destruction, she tries to push him away so he won't see what she's become or get killed by it.

Martin Durante: Farrah's four-year-old son. Even with a stable home and two focused parents Marty would be a handful to take care of but with Farrah (and sometimes Kaydon) barely holding things together, it's nowhere near enough.

The Creature: It's a metaphor and a real thing happening in the story. It drives the story forward and causes Farrah to act against the people she feels have wronged her and the fame-seeking system that's caused her so much anguish.

AN OSCAR WINNER BULLIED ME SO BADLY THAT I QUIT THE FILM INDUSTRY

George hoisted me up on top of a plastic picnic table in the middle of the front office and began dry-humping me. He pinned me in place as the table legs scooted back against the wall with his bodily force. The front doors opened, letting the fall air chill my exposed skin.

He was laughing. They were all laughing.

I thought there were only five people in the front lobby — a few producers, the production manager, the director, maybe a driver from transportation, a production assistant or two. I remember people saying to me later, when we were alone — not in front of anyone who could fire us — "I can't believe he did that! If we worked anywhere else, he'd be fired."

"Yeah," I said. I thought the same thing.

But none of us did anything about it.

What could I do? I was pretty low on the food chain. And my bosses all saw it. All guffawed. Enjoyed the show. I wasn't a person. I was an expendable.

I gave up my home to be part of this movie crew; moved all my belongings into storage and was living in a Motel 8 off an Omaha highway with a great view of the parking lot — everything a girl dreams of when she works her way up in the film business.

I wish that was the only time George humiliated me in front of people. But it wasn't. He took pleasure in making jokes at my expense, asking me if I wanted to act in the porn the characters in the movie watch, telling me I was stupid.

He didn't know me. He didn't care that I spent seven years working in production already, that I worked for Spelling Television and produced my own show, that I took the steps down in rank to help my friend and, in theory, myself.

"I need your help," Victor said over a call. "Linda can't go out of town, and I hoped you'd be willing to live in Omaha for three months and help me on the movie. They [the producers] want me to hire locals, but I can't trust them — they don't know anything." To sweeten the deal he said, "It's low-budget but a negative pick-up from Paramount. The pay isn't good, but I need someone who knows how to run an office."

I thought the call was heaven-sent. I had served my husband with divorce papers and wanted to put as much distance between me and the man who spent five years emotionally abusing me. I wanted to fill all my holes back in and prove I still had worth. I was at my best at work.

And there was Victor's cheery voice over the phone, laughing, giving me an escape route. If I said yes, I had three days to put my house on the market, my things in storage, and 1,500 miles between me and my soon-to-be ex.

Little did I know I had "victim" written on my forehead. That deciding to leave didn't mean the first door was an exit.

"Yes," I told Victor. And I went to be his production coordinator.

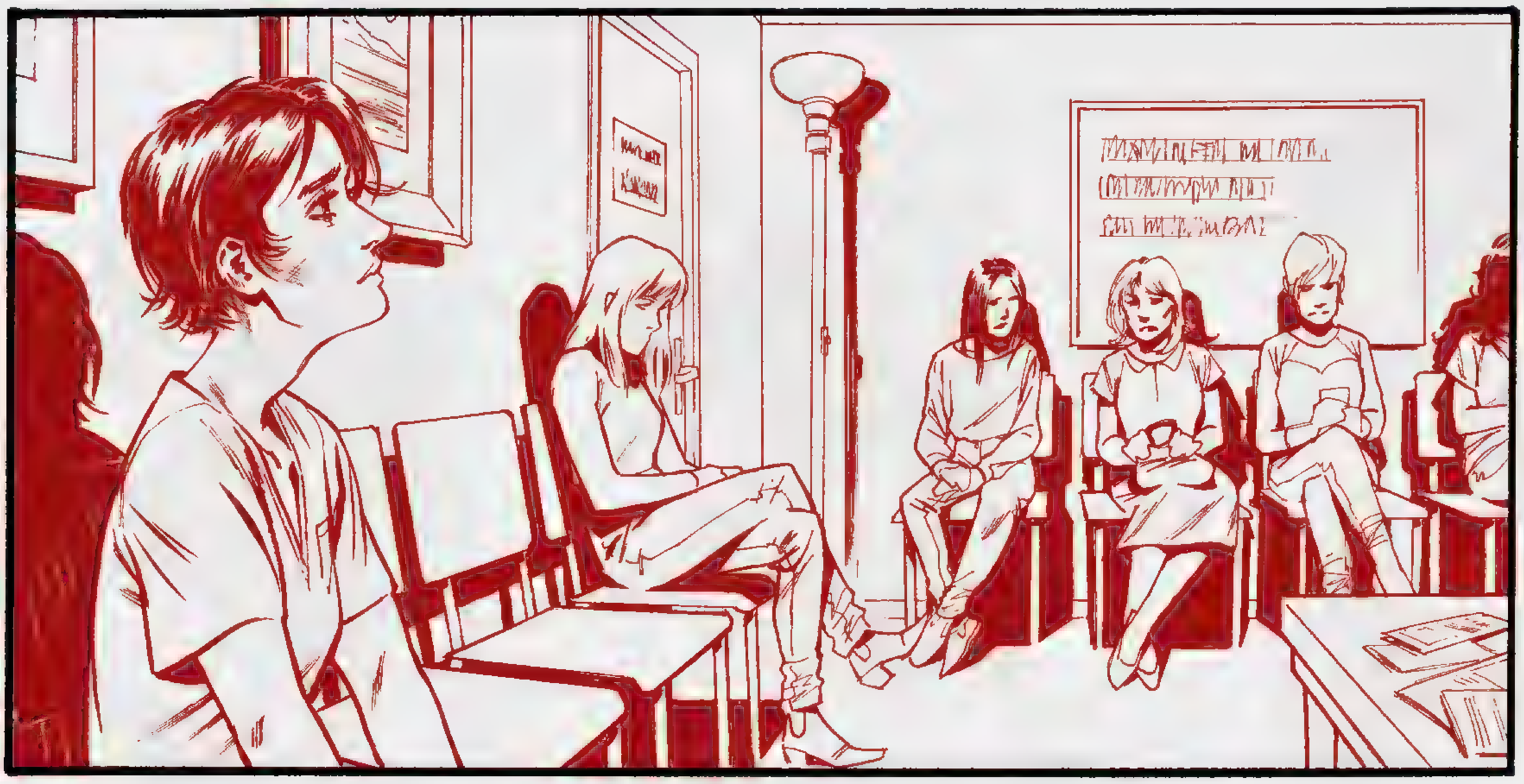
George wasn't the only man on set to treat me disrespectfully. But he was the only one to apologize. After calling me an idiot at a production meeting for asking how he preferred his paperwork, he wrote me an apology note.

"I shouldn't have done that. Sorry."

When he gave it to me, he told me I reminded him of his soon-to-be ex-wife. He was in the process of divorcing her and leaving his small child because he started an affair with the gorgeous lead actress on the movie he wrapped before this low-budget one. He and his big-budget girlfriend were better than us. His brown eyes laughed, and I wondered if this was the bullshit he fed his ex-wife, too.

I thumbtacked George's apology in public view behind my desk. I figured if he had the audacity to embarrass me in public, he should publicly apologize. There was still some fight in me.

One of the six producers on the film was a jerk, too. It was Jake's first time as a producer. He came from post-production



and didn't have much time on set. He overcompensated by informing the office staff of what our jobs entailed. The first day on location he had his assistant hand me a printout of a production coordinator's jobs and responsibilities. It was ironic.

Jake asked me to forge SAG sheets, changing the working hours of actors. I told him no. He threatened me to get me to do it. I said no. He said the producers didn't want to get in trouble. But they had no issue with hammering me down.

"Just do it," he insisted. "We'll get in big trouble."

As if I wouldn't.

Jake called me one morning from location while I was in the production office.

"How could you let us run out of film? Why are you including short ends in the total? What the fuck is wrong with you?"

"I'm not the camera department," I responded. "I don't fill in the totals on the production report, and if you don't want short ends in the total, talk to the director of photography, the first assistant camera, second assistant camera or loader. All on set."

He slammed the phone down on me. He conveniently forgot that, according to the paperwork he gave me, a production coordinator wasn't allowed on set. That my job had me firmly planted in the production office across town. Any time I asked to visit set, they wouldn't let me.

I stayed. I'd chat with my friend, Victor, the one who hired me. We talked about how clueless Jake was. We laughed at how my assistant kept trying to get me fired because she wanted my job. We laughed at how terrible it was that I couldn't keep a good production assistant because they wouldn't work the 12- to 14-hour days for less than $100 a day. We sat in his office and commiserated about how the producers told us each to do opposite things. Then he'd leave for set, and I'd be alone with a girl who wanted my job and bosses who used me as a punching bag.

I thought I could take it. I wanted to prove I was strong. I could handle all the bullshit. I was smart. I spent years learning all about each department so I could help solve problems. I had something to prove.

But having something to prove is a waste of time and energy.

The director, Alexander, had a problem with me. You see, I refused to forge the SAG sheets. And I had the nerve to send a whole script to a minor. Sending scripts to the cast was part of my job, but he didn't want the minor's family to read the script. He didn't want the parents to back out because of the scene of the actors watching porn or the lesbian relationship in the movie. Which is what happened.

Alexander called the production office and asked for me. It was the first time in eight weeks the director spoke to me directly.

"Tell me Jake made you do it."

His tone was terse. I imagined his temples sweating and his thick, black-rimmed glasses sliding down is hot face.

"Do what?" I asked. I had no idea what he was fuming about.

"Send the script. Tell me Jake made you do it."

Looking back, I know at this moment everyone else would have said, "Yes, Jake made me do it"; would have told the up-and-coming director that their tormentor told them to do it. I could've made myself the hero. I could have moved up the food chain and saved myself. I wish I had said yes. But I thought the truth mattered. I didn't want to join in the blame game.

"No, he didn't," I whispered.

"Who the fuck do you think you are?" Alexander cursed me out for a good minute or two. He called me every nasty, derogatory term and anything else his quick wit thought of. He drowned me under his tidal wave of rage.

Calm came over my mind as my body began to shake with fear and fury and inferiority. I kept my voice flat.

"I'm going to have to stop you there," I said. "No one talks to me that way."

"Fuck you," the director said.

My floodgate burst.

"I don't know who the fuck you think you're talking to, but no one talks to me like that," I repeated. I leaned forward on my desk. I needed its strength. I couldn't fall. My voice grew powerful. All the pain they inflicted on me was returned tenfold. I remember enjoying it. The phones started ringing off the hook again. I had work to do. I was over being the punching bag. "Fuck you!" I yelled, and I hung up on him.

"Holly, phone," my assistant said. She held the receiver toward me. She was across the room at her desk. Her eyes reflected her brain's calculations about the probability of me being fired and her opportunity to take my job. "Line two is Victor."

"Hi, Victor." I sank into my chair. "I think I may be fired."

He laughed. "I heard the whole thing." He had been standing next to Alexander and heard my side, too.

I wasn't fired. Alexander waited to dole out his punishment.

It was the day before our Thanksgiving holiday. We had worked six-day weeks, and it had been a long time since many of the crew had seen their families. Family members came to Omaha and took up residence with us in the Motel 8 to share a rubbery turkey dinner and 12 hours off. My mom was kindhearted enough to visit and lift my spirits.

To make up for the hell I dealt with, the second assistant director, Sean, invited me to set the day before Thanksgiving. He placed me as an extra in a scene. I sat in position during rehearsal, and just before Alexander was about to shoot, he asked me to leave.

Sean couldn't believe it.

"Let her stay," he said.

"No."

Without a word, I got up. As I walked off the set, Alexander spoke.

"Get back to the office," he said. "I don't want you on my set. At all."

Alexander didn't know my mom was on set that day, too, working as an extra with me. The assistant directors made sure she got camera time. Their apology to me.

Mom saw how they treated me, how I let myself be dismissed. She saw how small I'd become.

The worst day came not so long after that.

An art department truck was in an accident at the high school we used as the main film location. The cube truck hit a passenger vehicle, killing the teenage driver.

How could we stay? How could we finish the movie? How would we continue filming at the scene of a student's death? How did the movie matter now?

My phone blew up with calls. Red lights flashed across the phone. There was no way to answer them all.

"You'll probably get some calls," Jake said. His voice was soft. "Don't tell them anything."

"What could I tell them? I wasn't there."

Ringing filled the space between us.

"Don't pick up."

"What if it's one of our producers? The director? You?"

"Fine, pick up, but take messages. Don't tell them anything."

Jake didn't come to the office, and neither did the other producers. I don't recall handing it well, and I may have shared a producer's phone number in addition to taking messages.

I sat in the room under fluorescent lights and cried thinking about the kid who died and his family. I thought about the 20-something-year-old who killed a teenager because of a movie. Maybe he was on his way to pick up a prop or drop off paint. It was too terrible.

I think that's when I broke.

I lost my taste for the business and all the belittling I endured. How could a movie be more important than the people working on it? The idea that I had to know more and be tougher because I was a woman didn't feel right.

On the last day of filming, I walked away from the business.

George and Alexander saw their careers take off. Alexander was nominated for an Academy Award or two. People talk about his genius. George is a first assistant director on A-list blockbusters and became a producer for Alexander. (His actress girlfriend dumped him and married Hollywood royalty.)

I don't think of any of them fondly. I wonder if they're still up to their old tricks. I wonder if the actors who looked up to them and the viewers of their movies knew how misogynistic they were if they'd still be successful.

And I know the answer is yes.

I lost any passion I had for the art. I didn't understand why I let myself be treated so badly. I couldn't wrap my brain around why being good at my job wasn't enough. I got therapy. I found my voice and backbone, built boundaries, filled in my holes and remembered my worth.

I didn't want to be bitter. I wanted to be whole. It was immensely hard work putting a grown woman back together.

When I ventured back into production years later, I realized it was still filled with people proving they could do it. Proving they were better than others around them by shitting on them, backstabbing and stealing creativity.

But I no longer needed to prove my worth to famous strangers. I didn't need to prove I was strong enough to take the abuse. I learned I had my own creative longings, and I didn't need anyone's approval to pursue them, and I certainly didn't have the desire to give my ideas or self away anymore.

I elected to thrive away from the abuses of Hollywood. And by walking away, I learned I no longer found myself forced on my back, on top of a table locked in place and shaking. I didn't require a desk to steady my voice. I found my own legs, my own worth and voice.

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PRODUCTION SEDUCTION - STABBED IN THE BACK WITH A SMILE

In LA there is always someone prettier, thinner and younger than you. There's someone willing to work for less money. And guaranteed there's at least one friend smiling at you while simultaneously stabbing you in the back.

So who can you trust?

Nobody.

I never dreamed of Hollywood. I went out to LA after I graduated college because, along with my first credit card, I got a $99-roundtrip ticket to anywhere in the contiguous United States. At the time I lived in Washington, D.C., and had a Journalism degree with a minor in History. I dreamed of producing television news and thought, where is the farthest I can go? A lifelong friend lived in LA, and that's how I first arrived.

I loved the weather, the vibe and the scenery so much that I went back a month later. After spending a week there, I came back to D.C., left my roommate four months' rent and moved to LA. Before I left D.C. I called Chanticleer Films. A friend's ex-boyfriend got an internship there. He wasn't too smart, so I figured if he can work there, so can I.

"Can you start Monday?" Stephanie, the production coordinator, asked.

"Yes," I said.

The first month I lived on a futon in my friend's living room before moving into a townhouse with four guys who were friends of friends.

My parents helped me pay for a rental car, and I borrowed a Thomas Guide map and showed up my first day faking it until I made it. I didn't know a production assistant from an assistant director, but by the end of the week I could read a call sheet and a production report.

Armed with my used Thomas Guide and LA411, I learned to take the 101 from Valley Village to the Hollywood and Vine production office. From there I navigated my way to Fotokem, Panavision, Naimie's, JL Fisher, Chapman Leonard, Keslow Camera, Hollywood Rentals, and found out where to get used layout board.

I drove up Mulholland Drive, throughout Beverly Hills, learned the curves of Sunset Boulevard, passed the gates of Bel Air, learned when to take Olympic Boulevard versus Pico, Coldwater Canyon versus Laurel Canyon Boulevard, and when to get off at Fountain off La Cienega. I found my way past The Viper Room, The House of Blues, The Frolic Room, El Carmen, Jumbo's Clown Room and Trader Vic's. I got my brows done by Anastasia and bought clothes at Fred Segal.

I forgot the four seasons in the rest of the country and learned about June Gloom and El Niño and then fire, earthquake and mudslide seasons.

LA had me hook, line and sinker. It was about the new, the next thing, and it had intoxicating energy. I loved it.

Production fascinated me. Something about the number of people it took to get a moment on film was thrilling. I loved knowing what went on behind the scenes. The weeks of pre-production, the tension, the creative minds collaborating and fighting and struggling to make a vision that meant something but didn't last triggered an addiction in me. I needed more of it. I needed to be seen. I needed to prove I could do it. I couldn't recognize my own innate creativity, so I fed off the electricity of those around me and dreamed of being a producer.

I had a five-year plan. I'd go from production assistant to production coordinator to UPM to producer. It didn't matter if that wasn't the usual way. I don't know why I had a blind spot to the error in my logic. Coordinators weren't in the DGA, and they were barely IATSE — no one guaranteed their pay scale, and it didn't matter. I was going to do it with sheer will and brute force.

I was curious about everything. I had to know more than the men around me, and I was often tested to see if I knew what I was saying. And I wouldn't be embarrassed. I got close with a different department on each project. I studied their

language, the work they did, the equipment and budgets they required. Who went over budget and who stole most from production.

I appreciated the craft of the art department — how props are things that are touched by actors, and set dressing was everything else. How carpenters built flats, and on-set painters made concrete to look like marble, wood look like metal. How warehouses were full of furniture and knickknacks to dress a set and we could rent anything for a price.

I watched how the lowest of us in each department were made to pay dues. I wasn't allowed to sit on set. I was on set anywhere from 12 to 20 hours. I wasn't paid as a production assistant. Camera assistants hauled the huge boxes, grips humped cable, electricians tied them in. We were an ecosystem.

Watching movies became a game. Did I know the location it was shot? Did I see any production vehicles in the background? Was there boom shadow or mic pack? How many extras were walking in the background? I imagined where the second-second assistant director might be queuing them to walk. Did I know the designer clothes? Was that three-hour hair and makeup on the actress? Were there any glitches in continuity? My eyes searched the screen, taking apart the movie not for the acting but to see if I knew how to do it. Then after the movie was over, the entire theater sat and read the credits, all of the credits, to see if their name was in them or a friend's name scrolled by.

That's the good stuff, the part that made me stay — my name whizzing by in the end credit scroll. The thrill of moving up the food chain, to work on a better project and see how my hard work and running around created a new thing called Movie.

I wish the good stuff included trust and friendship. I do, but the intense ecosystem of production lives as long as shooting and disappears after wrap. People move onto the next job and start new friendships. Yes, departments tended to stick together. For example, a production designer would try to get their set decorator, property master leadman and favorite carpenter hired. But if a higher-up had someone they wanted, the production designer might lose the battle.

After 18 years of working in Los Angeles, I only have about ten friends who still work in the business. Once I left, I no longer had the power to hire people, so my friendship wasn't valuable.

One makeup artist friend offered to pick me up from the airport when I came to visit. I was supposed to stay with her too while attending another friend's wedding. I'd known her for 15 years. She did my makeup at my wedding.

I stood curbside at LAX with my phone pressed to my ear, getting her voicemail over and over. I thought she was working overtime. It was Friday night, and many shows shoot late because they aren't restricted by actor turnaround time the following day. Friday night is the day to make up pages missed during the week.

So I waited. But after about an hour I knew what happened. She wasn't coming. Being a no-show was her LA way of letting me know our friendship was over.

She's blonde, thin, always knows the hottest places to be seen and was nominated for an Emmy. Too bad she's getting old. I wonder who smiles at her now while they stab her in the back?

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STEPPING ON TOES - A HOLLYWOOD TRADITION

There's a saying in Hollywood: *Be careful of the toes you step on today because they may be attached to the ass you kiss tomorrow.*

Everyone says it when someone powerful does something shitty to a lower-ranking person. We say it under our breath around the craft services table while shoving food in our mouths. I powered through shitty situations by telling myself that one day when I'm a producer I won't treat people like that, I won't hire people who do, and I can't wait 'til I can fight back. But living and working in the Hollywood culture without being changed by it is impossible.

When I started in the business, I was naive. I believed hard work paid off. I gave 175%, but it didn't matter. Kissing ass is part of the game, and it was a part I didn't play.

As an intern for Chanticleer Films, I worked for months without pay as part of paying my dues. I believed my hard work was finally paying off when Bob, a producer, hired me to be his assistant. As his assistant I learned how to use Movie Magic software for budgeting and scheduling, how to read location agreements and how to sit quietly in the room as he talked to everyone. When I totaled my car while running an errand for the production, Bob started picking me up in the morning and we drove to set together.

Imagine my surprise when another girl at Chanticleer started talking smack about me. Caroline instigated an aggressive campaign to smear my name and eradicate six months of hard work. My friend Heather warned me she was out to get my job. Caroline had no qualms about lying to do it. Shortly after principal photography ended, Bob called me into his office and told me it was time for us to part ways.

"Is this because of Caroline?"

Bob didn't deny it. He nodded and said, "I've taught you all I can. Time to teach someone new." At least that's how I remember it. I have a vague memory of throwing up a little in my mouth and wishing I had the courage to fight back and argue against her lies. I didn't understand it was a "churn 'em and burn 'em" place and my time was over. With freshly stepped-on toes, I limped on and searched for my next free-lance job.

Several years later, karma came knocking. I was hiring an assistant production coordinator at Spelling Television. I sorted through a pile of resumes and scheduled interviews with the best of them.

One candidate sat up tall in front of me. He had decent credentials, and I saw that he'd also worked at Chanticleer Films. Curious if the culture had changed, I asked about his experience.

"My sister Caroline got me the job."

A smirk crossed my face.

"Caroline X is your sister?" I had to make sure it was the same one who dug her heels into my toes.

"Yes, that's her." He thought he was a shoe-in for the job.

"Tell your sister you interviewed with me."

"Great!"

"That's all," I said, ending the interview.

He left. I hired someone else. It felt good. I imagined her face when she learned I was at Spelling and doing well. It felt good. That's what the slippery slope of Hollywood does to you. It slowly makes you into the monster you hate.

On an earlier Chanticleer movie I was a production assistant, and part of my job was to drive Jeff Goldblum.

Being Jeff's driver meant I picked him up every morning from his Hollywood Hills house and drove him to set. This was before GPS and iPhones. I had a call sheet and a map, and it was my job to navigate us all over a 50-mile radius around LA, even when I wasn't familiar with the roads or location.

Jeff instructed producers to tell me to ring the bell at the end

of his driveway. I wasn't allowed to knock or honk. He'd always make me wait 10 to 15 minutes before he'd emerge from his house, stressing me out for fear of arriving late to set. I started arriving early to avoid the added time pressure.

The movie was *Lush Life*. Jeff was a saxophone player in the film and practiced air sax in my car alongside pre-recorded music as we drove around 45 minutes to our destination. Jeff enjoyed looking through the passenger side window when we were at stop lights to see how long it took people in the cars next to us to recognize him. Then he'd make that trademark Jeff "Mmm~" noise, give a smile and a wave.

At first I found his quirks amusing and felt lucky to be driving one of the principal actors. That all changed the day I got lost. I made a wrong turn at the 110/101 interchange downtown. Jeff had to help me read the map attached to the call sheet and assist in navigating me back the other direction. I felt terrible. I was sweating, and panic sizzled inside my body.

We managed to figure out how to turn around but arrived to set late. It took all of two minutes for the UPM to call me into his trailer. Jeff wanted me fired. They decided not to, but the energy between Jeff and me changed. He didn't bother being charming with me any more. Producers made Heather his handler. It was now her job to bring Jeff his breakfast — 10 egg whites with two lean chicken breasts — and anything else he requested on set.

Then, during a late night shoot at a downtown historic hotel, my name came over the walkie-talkie. The producers wanted to see me. They told me to fetch Jeff. Heather wasn't answering their calls, and production was waiting.

I knocked on his hotel room dressing room. Jeff opened the door in his Calvin's.

Heather was in the background.

"Jeff, you look great," I said, giving his body two thumbs up. "But they need you on set."

He winked and gave me an "okay" before closing the door to finish whatever was going on and get dressed.

Fast-forward 10 years. A dear friend of mine sold a script and was set to direct a movie at New Line Cinema. He invited me to a Beverly Hills hotel to attend the table read with the cast: Bruce Willis, Bradley Cooper, Ed Harris, Joshua Melina and Jeff Goldblum.

It was thrilling to be there as the cast read the script. The room filled with laughter. Jeff kept looking up at me. He smiled and flirted. At one point he peered up from the script, pointed at me and mouthed the words, "I know you," moving his hands with grace and signature accents.

I nodded.

He smiled.

When the reading was over and people in the room were buzzing with excitement, Jeff walked over to me, his eyes glinting flirtatiously. He leaned in close.

He asked me to remind him when we worked together. I must have been a producer or casting agent he couldn't place.

I returned his smile. I thought he really was charming and endearing when I wasn't afraid he'd get me fired. "I worked with you on *Lush Life*." I paused waiting for a reaction. "I was the PA who drove you." I moved my hands as if they held an invisible steering wheel.

"Ahh, yes." He smiled and leaned back. Then his eyes took me in, my clothes, my hair, the script in my hands. I saw his calculations and curiosity over why I was in the room with the cast of A-list actors, New Line executives and a director — what was my part in this?

"You've done well," he said.

"Thank you." I enjoyed being illusive. "My friend is the writer-director."

Jeff nodded, said something else enchanting and polite, and then we parted ways. I was impressed that he vaguely remembered we once spent six weeks together.

Be careful of the toes you step on today because they may be attached to the ass you kiss tomorrow.

Jeff knew enough to make nice because he didn't know my position or power in the room. Did he remember he wanted me fired? Who knows, but maybe, for just a moment, seeing me made his heart race and his insides sizzle. Would he have to be nice to a person he once disliked?

So many toes.

My friend's movie was a perfect reflection of the hard work, ass kissing and one-in-a-million lucky turns that makes an ordinary person advance in Hollywood. The razor-sharp edge between success and failure.

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NEVER AFTER

I met my first husband, an art director, on a movie about infidelity called *Love Matters,* starring Tony Goldwyn, Griffin Dunne, Kate Burton, Gena Gershon and Annette O'Toole. I saw him sitting on a Santa Clarita Studios sound stage reading the same book I was. He wore his glasses on a string around his neck and had wood chips scattered over his clothes from carpentry. He was tall and thin with long, dark hair and sad eyes. When we started dating my only criteria to keep dating him was if I could fit into his pants. I did. One month later we were living together. I was 23.

I saw his pain and recognized the feelings of not being enough. I believed if I loved him enough I could make him happy. I didn't understand his lack of self-worth would turn into hostility toward me.

I moved in with a man whose marriage lasted six months and whose final divorce papers arrived weeks after we met. I tried loving him more so he'd be happy. His moods instead got darker and he withdrew from our bedroom the day we returned from our honeymoon.

On our wedding day his mother pulled me aside. She wore a long white skirt and jacket. I couldn't believe she was wearing white.

She held my hand and said, "It's not too late." I was in my wedding dress, my hair and makeup done.

"You don't have to do this," she said.

In the moment I thought she was evil, but later, when I called her crying over her son's cruelty, I understood what she tried to do that day. She was warning me. She knew her son and knew how mean he was. She tried to protect me. But I didn't know enough to listen.

Tension became my normal. I never knew what I'd find on the other side of the door when I came home — if he'd be overtly angry or passive aggressively stewing — but I knew something bad always waited for me. I absorbed his anger over being treated unfairly at work, I absorbed his self-derision for being unemployed, I fed him and I took on his pain so he could be happy. No matter how much of my soul I sacrificed to him, it was never enough. I was his punching bag and I thought I could take it.

My helplessness at home made me work harder. During the five years we were together I was determined to prove myself somewhere. I needed to be seen and appreciated, so I did my best to become invaluable at work.

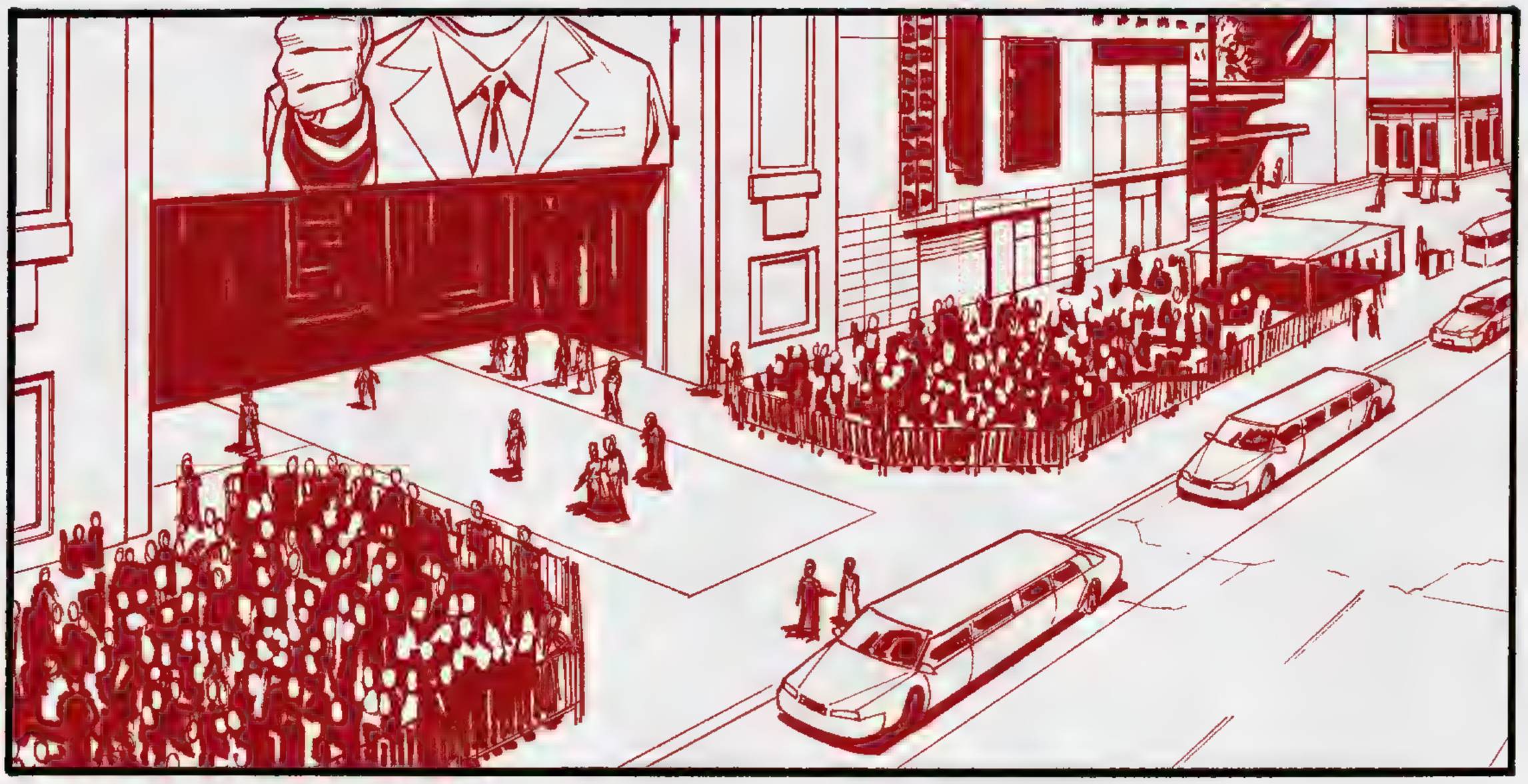
I worked for Spelling Television for a few years and thought my loyalty and dedication had value. I helped convert an old warehouse into a sound stage by setting up the front office. I had a good rapport with my producer and production manager. We all laughed through the stress and hunkered down when necessary. It was the one place I felt good about myself. They told me I looked pretty when my husband told me I looked ugly. They said I was funny; he told me I was stupid and forgetful.

My boss said, "One day, Holly, we'll all be working for you." And my husband said I didn't pay enough attention to what he said.

7th Heaven changed everything at work. The executive producer, Brenda, was mean. She had many demands. She had a manny (a young male nanny), but no children. She had the producer give up his parking space and give it to her. It doesn't seem like a big deal, but it was. Taking his spot was her way of demonstrating power. The executive producer's office was located in Spelling Television's corporate offices on Wilshire Boulevard, and our set was in Santa Monica. She rarely, if ever, came to set. And when she did come we gave her the best parking spot, but that wasn't enough for her. She wanted a permanent spot with her name in front of the production office door, and we gave it to her. It was empty all but three days per shooting season.

She fired the assistant director team for getting too friendly with the cast. She fired the producer. She fired writing assistants for making friends with us on set. And she was out to fire me, too.

On the first day of shooting, the cast and crew were on



location. The only people in the production office were my assistant, a production assistant and me. I can't remember who called first, but I do remember all ten red flashing lights on the office phone lighting up all at once, and I knew it couldn't be good.

"Brenda wants you fired," Janice, the assistant to the executive in charge of production at Spelling Television, said. Her voice was whisper quiet as if sharing a secret.

"What?" I was shocked.

"You shouldn't have done that," Janice continued. Then, "I have her, " she said to her boss, Gail, and patched me through.

"Tell me what happened," Gail said.

"What are you talking about?" I felt my perfect track record crack. The ground beneath me tore apart as if an earthquake split my foundation.

Gail continued in her steady tone. "Brenda is furious. She said you didn't know who she was and you yelled at her to move her car."

I was confused. "What are you talking about? I'm in the office, not at set."

"She said she pulled up to set and you yelled at her to move her car."

"Gail, I'm not even there. And I know who she is — I'd never do that."

"She said a girl with long, dark, curly hair told her to get off set."

"It's probably the DGA trainee, Marla. She has long, dark, curly hair and you're talking to me on the production office phone. I'm not on set."

"Well, she's blaming you."

My heart raced. I clutched the receiver. "But I'm not even there."

"I'll see what I can do."

The production manager called me, we tried to strategize, but we knew the executive producer would have the final say. A rumor started, and everyone said Brenda had a friend she wanted to replace me with. And now she had a reason to do it.

The truth of what happened that day is this: The DGA trainee was sitting outside the actors' trailers. Her job was to keep people away. Brenda pulled up onto set — literally onto the set not knowing or understanding it was a location shoot where she parked illegally. Marla, not knowing who Brenda was, told her to move her car and get off set.

Gail and the producer called me later saying I wouldn't get fired, but I had to apologize.

The eggshells I left at home scattered across the production office floor. I wasn't safe anywhere. My best didn't matter and I didn't matter.

At work, the days of joking and laughing through the stress of production morphed into days tiptoeing around landmines. Brenda came down on me for crooked staples in her crew lists, I got yelled at for talking to Steve an assistant in her office, I was blamed for streaks in her faxes and a million other stupid things that made my life miserable.

Brenda would call my direct line and yell at me for things I can't even remember. I only recall the nauseous feeling in my stomach, the need to take smoke breaks, not eating and how doubting myself affected me. I recall losing confidence in the simplest of tasks. And all the apologies I gave, bowing to her power, trying to assuage her ego to keep my job another day.

No matter how well I worked within the Spelling Television family, she was the executive producer of a hit show, and she didn't like me. Spelling was going to keep her happy, which meant my imminent departure.

Nine months after the pilot was shot, I knew I wouldn't be working on *7th Heaven* next season.

But it was my responsibility to coordinate the crew's wrap party. Yup, after being removed from my job it was my responsibility to find a venue, a menu and décor for 150 people I'd probably never see again. And Mr. Spelling's office had to approve it all.

My nearly ex-husband and I were on terrible terms. I was in therapy and began examining why I was where I was in my life. I revealed my darkest secret; I was raped when I was 15. My husband didn't comfort me. He stood and looked down on me — no hug or compassion. The day after my revelation my husband presented me with a gift when I came home from work. I opened the box and saw black trashy lingerie.

In therapy I continued to explore all the circumstances that led me to be married to a man who was heartless, told me I was terrible, stupid and ugly and allowed myself to work for a woman who hated me.

I felt like those who disliked me demanded my attention and I had nothing more to give. But I've always been a person of my word and strived to do my best, so I planned the wrap party.

I remember being scared the night of the party. My nearly-ex and I drove silently to the venue. There I had to make sure everything was right. He sat down at a table and sulked while I worked. Just what I needed — another stressor making my night difficult. Not only was the crew at the party, but a few of the cast showed up along with Spelling Television executives. The event was a make it or break it moment for my self worth. I needed everything to be perfect. The night had to be a spectacular hit. I wanted to leave on a high note.

People arrived and enjoyed themselves. Music started playing, friends asked me to dance. I was afraid to have fun.

I checked in with my spouse. "Dance with me?"

"No," he said. "You can." I asked again. I didn't believe him. He was testing me.

I hadn't danced since he and I got together. I disregarded a favorite thing to make him happy. I was a dancer my whole life until him. I also stopped going to the beach. I stopped smiling. I made myself smaller and smaller, but in that moment I remembered how joyful dancing made me feel.

"Okay, I'll be right there." I pointed to a spot on the dance floor he could see. I wouldn't do anything that would upset him. I wouldn't sneak off and have fun with friends; I'd dance where he could see me. Maybe seeing me happy would make him happy, too.

Out on the floor all the pain I held inside slipped out. I heard myself sing along with the song and laughing with my friends. I looked up, checking in with my husband, making sure my fun didn't upset him. One song. Two songs. By the third song he was gone.

"Stay," my friend Jennifer said, as I stepped off the dance floor.

"I can't. I have to find him." I pointed to the empty chair.

I can't explain the fear I felt. The rush of anxiety at not knowing where he was and knowing somehow I caused what would be another fight. I upset him. As I searched the venue, I walked into Mr. Aaron Spelling, Gail, other executives at Spelling Television and Brenda. And something snapped.

I stopped my frantic search for my angry husband and asked, "How are you all enjoying your night?" I swallowed my fear. I stood tall and smiled.

Mr. Spelling said, "You did a wonderful job," and shook my hand.

The others told me what a wonderful worker I was.

Gail smiled. "This is great. You really did it."

"Thank you," I said, and shook their hands.

Brenda looked down at me; she seemed to be seven feet tall. No malice showed in her eyes and neither did recognition. "You did great all year. Thanks so much," she said.

I turned my head slightly, held her hand firmly and smiled, "Thank you. And by the way, I'm Holly." Then I turned toward Gail and Mr. Spelling and said, "See, I told you. She doesn't even know who I am." Before I walked away I caught a glimpse of Brenda's slack-jawed look of shock.

I found my husband at valet getting into our car. He was about to leave without me. He yelled at me for having fun. He yelled at me for making him bored. He yelled at me for not finding him faster. He yelled at me for the 45-minute drive home.

I knew this pattern in my life had to end. I left Spelling Television on good terms. Gail told me I was always welcome back, but part of me knew working there wasn't good for me. My husband and I agreed to separate. When he moved out, my neighbors told me they saw him beat our pet dog when I wasn't home and expressed how scared they were for me. I'll never know how close his verbal and emotional blows came to bruises.

I wanted to get out of town and away from everything toxic, and that's when I was hired to work on *Election*.

While working on *Election* I was thrown onto a table and dry-humped in front of the crew. The director demeaned me. The toxicity of Hollywood continued to feed on me. Darkness grew within me, but my spirit hadn't vanished.

My need to be seen was slowly replaced with my need to feel whole. I walked away from a career and life that from the outside was exciting, but from the inside it was an insidious beast destroying me.

Despite being broken I refused to succumb. I picked up the pieces of my life, drew boundaries and slowly healed. And now I watch from the sidelines as Hollywood has its way with those I left behind.

★★★★★

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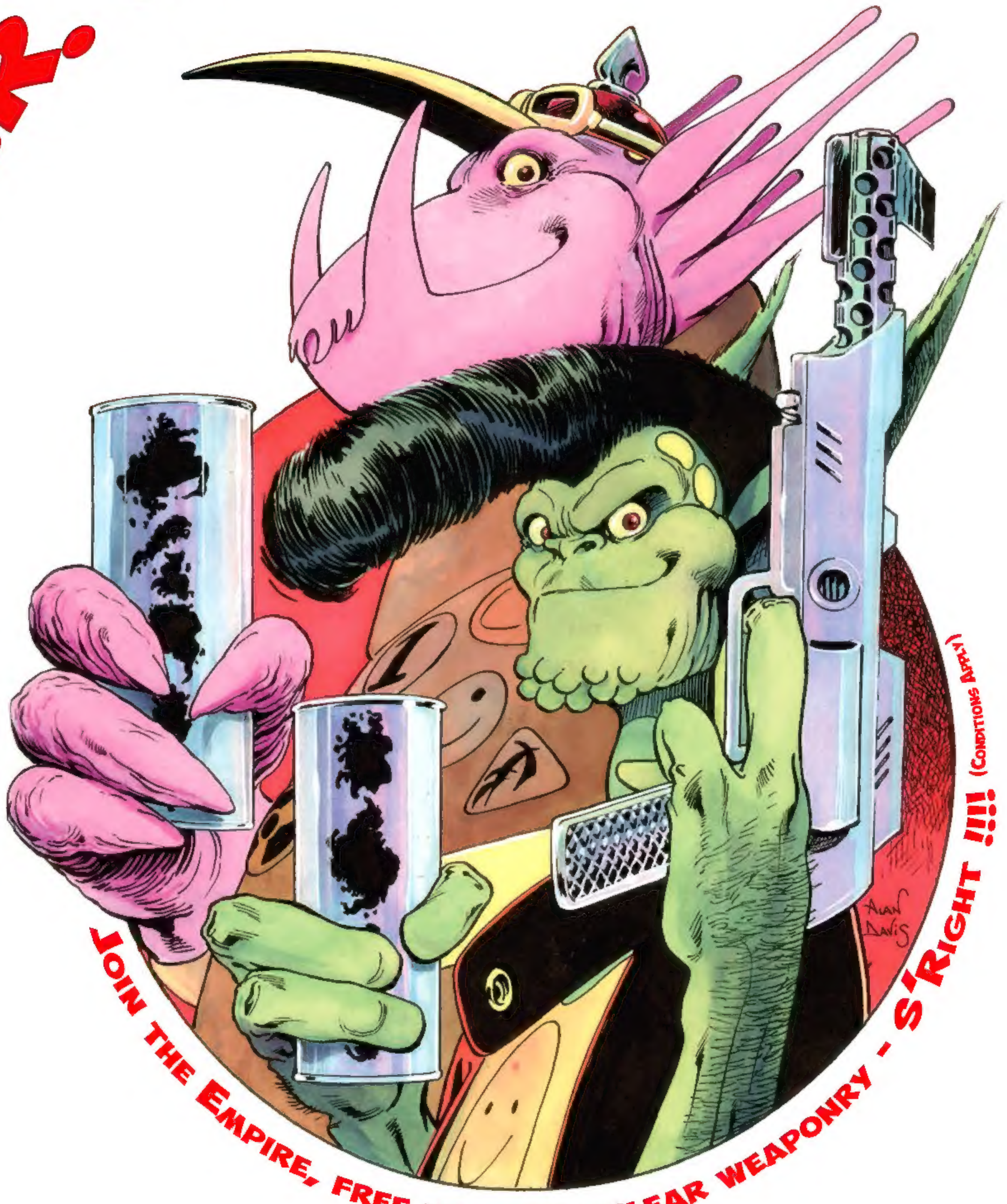

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